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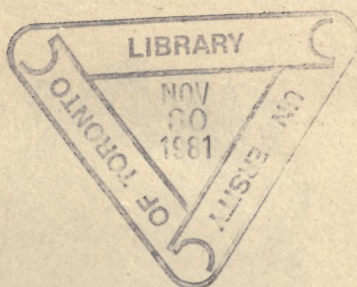
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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

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THE SCENE OF WAR.—IV.

INTERLUDES.

FROM Italy I passed through Switzerland. The transition is marked as one passes in this way from a country at war into a country at peace. One's first emotion is one of relief. For war in these years of grace is emphatically a burden upon the spirit of the traveller. Apart from the considerable dislocation that there is in the conveniences of civilised life, the uncertainty of trains, the pre-occupation of most of those whom one meets with, the one sombre thing that obsesses their minds, there is active or veiled hostility. Every traveller is suspect. The passport business is a long and wearisome affair, the formalities endless in their details. For the small functionary, the creature of red tape, this is the time of his life. The Jack-in-office feels himself exalted to the condition of a patriot, and

becomes a Cerberus of the national honour. If you are given to speaking the truth, it is not pleasant, after you have offered all the requisite assurances in reply to questions asked, to find that you have spoken in vain; to have your letters read, your purse emptied, your shoes removed, your body searched as if you were a thief. You are fortunate if you are not stripped and your skin examined with a microscope. You realise what autocratic power means; you perceive dimly what it must be like to have no personal rights whatever. You are here because some one permits you to be here; but you can be detained, bullied, put under restraint, and generally speaking treated as a potential thief, liar, or criminal, according as the fancy moves this powerful personality under whose licence

you move and live. Over and above this, you have to suffer fools gladly; and fools abound. The air about you is soured with suspicion and intrigue. Your reason tells you that all this is inevitable; your philosophy may enable you to take it with a smile, but you are glad when it is over, when the frontier is crossed, and the burden is lifted from your shoulders, as it is in a quiet pleasant land like Switzerland.

Your next emotion—it comes more slowly—is one of pity for those who, unlike yourself, are out of the War. You believe—as we the Allied peoples rightly believe—that the War is being fought for the triumph of Right over Wrong, for Liberty and Freedom, for the rights of the small and the humble, as well as for those of the great and the mighty—for the ultimate Civilisation of the World. And then, though you are in love with the quiet and the peace of a country like this that is not at war, you are glad that you do not belong to it. The spiritual is greater than the material, and it is better to die for a good cause than to live without honour. This country knows that we are fighting for its right to exist—the ideals of Liberty and Freedom it holds in common with ourselves. It is content to let us do the fighting. We do not blame its people; it is their own affair. There is no country in the world that is less resentful than ours of the neutral attitude. I believe we may claim to be the most tolerant people on the face of the earth. We are con-

sidered on the Continent to have carried our honesty to the verge of the quixotic; our treatment of the Greeks, for example, to the extreme of weakness; but in our hearts we are glad, whatever the price, that this War has found us in the forefront of the battle. A great people cannot live without honour.

I left for Paris. The country through which the train runs to Vallorbes is almost English in its rural peace and beauty. One is in the middle of green swelling meadows, in which the freshly-cut hay lies in swathes; of dark leafy woods with the peace of evening brooding over them. At Vallorbes there is a strict custom-house examination; and at Frasnès we go through a pen, one by one, to show our passports. Here for the first time I see the old style of French soldier in his madder trousers and long blue coat, a relic of days that are as dead as the mastodon.

We are in France. The sky is starry overhead, with wisps of flying cloud; the night is cold. We have a long time to wait for the overdue train. When it comes at last, with its lights shining in the darkness, its sudden rush and swirl of movement, we are sealed within it from the outer world, and pass without incident or observation across France. But in the morning the scene outside our windows is one that is culled from the very heart of this bountiful land. The sky is radiant with light, the gently undulating plain spreads from horizon to

horizon, the great rivers flow placidly through the richly tilled soil, unheeding of the War. It is France at peace, smiling, relentless in her toil.

We arrive at the Gare de Lyon, and I feel that I am already half in England. Two British soldiers in khaki, with their plain solid air, are poring over a paper. In the buffet two officers are phlegmatically going through an early breakfast, one with an eyeglass, the other a son of Anak. And from time to time others come and go: now an Australian soldier with his plumed hat and bandolier, racy and warlike; now a General of the same breed, burly and fresh of hue, with an officer of his Staff, a man with the slim refined face of a naval officer. There is a French officer, too, whose breast is covered with medals, which look a little odd, like those of a professional athlete, suspended on his breast. The British ribbon is more reserved.

Paris is quiet, devoid of her wonted brilliancy, her air of luxury. She is not sad, but she has become dowdy, and is given over to the commonplace. The War has robbed her of her glitter and foam,

the sparkle of her rings. She is a little dull. . . .

When one is far away in foreign lands the prevailing doubt, the veiled distrust, of our arms somewhat settles upon one's mind; but one's spirit rises in contact with the British soldier. One knows at once that in him there still resides the greatness of his country. In these cold, unimaginative faces, under their air of reserve, there lives a quality akin to that which made the Romans the masters of the world. We make many and grievous mistakes, and have paid a heavy price for them, but we shall win through at the end. Neither in Italy nor in France have I felt this conviction so strongly as I do now that I am again in touch with the spirit of our people.

The hour, too, is full of the magnetism of impending events. It is the 30th of June. The voices of the English guns are being heard afar off in our country villages and inland towns. The world is expectant; there is a stillness in the air, like that which precedes the Sirocco; the long-hoped-for advance of the British army they say is about to begin.

BACK IN BLIGHTY.

I arrived in England this morning, the 1st of July. Last night in crossing from Havre I shared a big cabin with a dozen other men, all British and Australian officers going over on duty or short leave.

Some of the younger men were of superb physique. It is a finer stock this than that of Italy or France; more erect, lithe, vital; and unlike our friends, full of fun, boyish, chaffy. Even the old Austra-

lian colonel walking about in his shirt, and without his trousers, is like a boy in his cheery enjoyment and fun. The ship's officers and stewards are so brief, helpful, matter-of-fact, and wholly unconcerned about tips. There are many women and children.

"Slept like a top," says the Highland officer with a laugh, as though the sea was the safest place in the world. So did I.

Havre was full of our people, British and Australians—big strong men at every corner of the old seafaring town. Its lineaments were French, but the spirit that moved in it was the spirit of our race. The Irish sergeant of the Scots Guards, who stood on duty at the passport wicket, was a giant, who could have carried off a gun on his shoulders. "Ladies in fursst," was his chief preoccupation; very disturbing to the closely-packed queue, yet was one secretly proud to find the old chivalry still at work. It was the first time I had noticed it between Salonica and Havre.

At Southampton all went quickly, orderly, and effectively; the calm British spirit presiding over all. And then as the train moved, the soft countryside—unmatched in the world—the open fields, the fat hedges, the noble trees and sheltered homesteads, slowly deployed before my eyes. Was it five years ago, or was it yesterday, that I was here?

London is so vast and complicated; so much that in some lesser space would fas-

ciate the eye and seize the imagination is here lost in the swirl and movement of the City—the Greatest City of the World. There is so much for one to do and think of, after a long absence, in this capital of an empire, that since coming here I have all but forgotten that we are at war. And I suppose it is because of all these things that it is impossible to seize upon any one impression and say such was London in the great days of the War. Soldiers throng her streets in such numbers that you might think there was no battle-line at all; there are so many wounded men about that you might think you had run into a convalescent hospital; the pavements are so crowded with people, the streets so dense with traffic, that you might think the life of London was completely aloof from the life of the world and its passion of conflict. So many trains come and go, so many motors speed along the streets, the hotels are so full, that at a first glance you might think the war was not touching the people of this country at all. There is no lack of wealth, no visible abatement in the expenditure of the people. Plays of the most brilliant and gorgeous description, got up regardless of cost, are a feature of the hour. Every seat at the principal theatres is booked in advance. The life of this marvellous city goes on *seemingly* as though the world was not in tumult, and twenty million men were

not at death-grips with each other across the width of Europe.

And yet the war is evident at every turn. The voices of the newsboys ring with legends of Victory; the newspaper bills are big with headlines of battles won, of strongholds forced, of feats of arms, of prisoners taken by the thousands; the Roll of Honour fills the wide columns of the journals with the names of those who have died for their country,—the Roll of Sorrow some of us call it.

And yet again there is no mourning in the streets. You do not find here any impression of grief or loss. Those who are stricken know what is in their hearts; but they keep the knowledge to themselves. In the thoroughfares there is laughter, and a determined enjoyment of life. Upon the great bridges that span the river, upon the fringe of the great crescent of twinkling lights that marks the flow of the City and its history from the days of the Conqueror to this year of grace, lovers abound, and the tide of life and passion flows on unheeding, like the waters whispering on their way to the sea.

Yet are there times when the heart almost stops beating, and one's soul is rapt in communion with the brave.

I was at a theatre to-night—the first I have been in since I arrived; and I laughed, and cried a little, with the sentiment of the play, and lived for the moment in another world of the writer's imagin-

ing. Then I stepped out into the solemn street, with its veiled lights, its mystery of people, its ghost-like fantasies, each taxi-cab or motor-bus a potential instrument of death. I suppose that Venice may have left some such impression when the veiled gondolas swept by upon their business, and the shadows were dark with intrigue. Yet there, there must always have been silence, while here there was the complex music and thunder of the great city—*Vaga murmura Romæ*.

I walked towards Trafalgar Square, where the revolving searchlights meet and intermingle in the far-flung spaces of heaven, and the flying clouds were lit from moment to moment as they swept on upon their ardent course. It was a scene of indescribable beauty, full of a strange portent of the days to come. They were seeking, one knew, for the enemy in the sky. . . .

And then, as if by some instinct of consolation and assurance, they came low and bathed in their lustre, transfiguring it, the slight heroic figure of The Great Captain; and it was as though he lived again; and the spirit of Nelson was there keeping watch and ward over his England.

There were not very many people in the Square, but as I turned up towards Charing Cross the crowd thickened on the pavements, and I could hear the sound of cheering. It being now well on towards midnight, I wondered idly what was the occasion, when there

came towards me, down the silent, almost empty street, a motor, grey and vague in its outlines, but glowing like a heart on fire, with the red symbol of the Cross. It passed, and as it went by I saw within it a Nurse bending over the shattered forms of four brave men come home again from the Wars. And after it, through the crowd that had gathered up to the walls of the station, came ambulance after ambulance full of others such as these. Some sat up and cheered as the roses fell at their feet; others lay still and silent, too broken by pain to make any response.

And the mob who threw the roses, the women as they strained forward, of what were they thinking? Of Nelson and

the Empire? Of the clash and murmur of history? It seemed not.

"Pore fellers," said one.

"I see'd 'im," said another, laughing lightly as at a show, "through the winder."

"'Im" was no one to her in particular, but Curiosity, being a lady, was satisfied.

"Lovey," said a New Zealander, pressing his temporary girl closer to his side.

"You'se a beauty," she said ardently, looking up into his bronzed face, moved by the hidden forces of life.

It all comes down to that in the end. The woman loves the brave man, as in the dawn of things; and the brave man finds his compensation in being loved. Even Nelson, you know, was like that.

THE BRITISH IN FRANCE.

ACROSS THE CHANNEL.

It is the 23rd of September, and six o'clock in the morning. The full tide of London's traffic has not yet begun to roll upon its way; the streets are still half empty; the day has hardly yet begun. The City lies grey and mauve in the breaking light; the river is veiled in mists. High up in the heavens the first rays of sunlight are painting an opal sky.

I pass into Charing Cross, and the shadow of War. The platform by which the Folkestone train is waiting is crowded with officers and soldiers going to the Front, and the P. and O. passengers,

manifestly well-to-do and luxurious, are seated in the Pullman cars. Week after week they go away thus to their jobs in the East,—to waiting husbands and fathers who have not seen them for years; the Commissioner's wife, the General's daughter,—to that India which draws to itself some of the best blood and brains this land can produce. It is "Business as usual" with them — Boche or no Boche, submarine or no submarine. Weekly the tide flows Eastward, and the Empire holds.

I enter a third-class carriage with nine privates of the

line. The train moves through Kent; England but faintly visible, green and lovely through the drifting grey and amethyst of the morning haze. The Nine Men do not talk. One or two slumber, the rest smoke and are silent. The red-eyed wives and the light-footed sweethearts who came to see them off have vanished into the past; yet if one could look behind the stoical face of this man of forty, one might see there a picture of his home and of little John and Mary; and, behind the mask of that chap there with the hard eyes and the clean-cut jaw, a grim softness for the girl who kissed him last night. Only when we reach Folkestone is the silence of this company broken.

"Ome again," says one with a bitter humour; and to the clatter of accoutrements and ammunition boots the carriage rapidly empties of its burden.

As I step out on to the platform, an exquisite picture assails me: of a crinkling sea and a pale blue mackerel sky; of white chalk cliffs and green downs that reach over to the very edge of the waters; of a little harbour full of fishing craft and their old-world tracery of masts and nets and rigging. The world moves on, but these things were here before England became England, and when Britain was still a little Celtic island hidden in the mists of the Northern Seas.

A regiment of Australian infantry marches down the long pier-head; *thud, thud, thud*;

with the tramp of a Roman legion; but whistling and humming a tune, cheery and joyous, the Freemen of the World.

How it touches one,—this flowing in to their old home of all the moving tides of Empire.

Upon the decks there are officers standing in groups, hawk-nosed, beribboned, aristocratic; men of the old wars. There are Frenchmen and Belgians, women in costly furs, ensconced in deck-chairs, luxurious. We move past the transports full of troops in khaki, and the air is rent with their cheers. When these men die they will die like victors ascending to a banquet of the gods.

As we move it is evident that this crossing of the waters is not without its risks. Every one on board wears a life-belt.

It is a morning of great beauty, and as I look over the ship's side towards the receding English shore, it is a green sea that I look upon, patterned with the white lace of the wash, sunlit here, shadowy there, where the grey cloud made by the trailing smoke lends an added wonder to the scene. It leaves upon one an indelible impression, as of a strong hand guarding our rights upon the sea—as of a force that is alive and vigilant, and will neither be resisted nor within human limits be taken unawares.

What must it be out there in the grey North Sea, where the

Grand Fleet keeps its unceasing watch and ward?

We have left behind us the cares and the *insouciance* of the common life, and are at one stroke involved in the stern and simple business of War. Our decks are crowded with troops—infantry, cavalry, gunners, each with his rifle and his arms. There is something primal about this fellowship of the man and his weapon. The officer is secondary, necessary, but less immediate. The private, in his simplicity and directness, is the type of the man-at-arms. His task is plain, and he is equipped to perform it on the instant.

We reach Boulogne. It is the same land of green downs running in billows to the sea; but there rests upon it the in-

definable impress of another race. It is less homely, less exquisite; its architecture makes for display. The Italian was longer here than he was in England. But the pier upon which one has so often stood in times of peace, with the pain of parting still fresh in one's heart, is to-day itself an intimate part of our soil. The British army is in occupation, and English is spoken upon every side. Never in the history of the world have so many of the island people stood upon the soil of this continent of France.

Let our friends not forget the impulse that has sent them here; loyalty to *them*, devotion to a great Cause; the driving-force of five million freemen self-enlisted for War.

A VISIT TO ARRAS.

Our course to Arras lies through an ancient forest, past the little town and chateau of —, which have stood here for a thousand years. Upon the horizon there is war and the sound of guns; but here is a little corner left over from the Middle Ages: one can see at a glance the relationship of this little cluster of men to the castle on the hill; and when one passes from the cobbled street under the gateway of the chateau it is as though a magician had waved his wand before one's eyes.

The castle belongs to the Duchesse d'Uzès, to whom it has descended through gener-

ations of princely men. There is no quieter spot in the world than this old half-ruined fortress with its vivid beds of flowers, its fruit-trees on the walls, its grassy courts, and its brave old walls of a bygone age, when men lavished upon stone the patient toil of a jeweller working in gold. Here the Black Prince lodged in his forays, and Marlborough fired his guns, shattering into fragments more than half the castle.

As I walk in, there at one end are the remnants of the banqueting hall, with its rich Gothic tracery and lovely windows, in which Edward Prince

of Wales is said to have feasted in the company of his friends; the old keep, for all the perfection of its masonry, ruined by Marlborough's guns; the moat with its golden foliage and slumbering peace; the sunlit rooms with their vast south windows overlooking the humble feudal town, and the rolling weald, luminous in the September sun. Beside the parlour there is the kitchen with its pleasant odours, its battery of cuisine—the speciality of France.

In a wing of the chateau there are the rooms reserved for the Duchesse's use when she comes at intervals to this old haunt of her people.

The memory of this place must be of a particular fragrance to those who have found in it a momentary shelter from the stress and fury of war.

The long white road along which we are travelling has brought us to the very edge of the battle, and we dare not follow it any farther. There is no visible barrier; but if you look at the map you will notice that in this month of September 1916 the frontier line lies very near the broken city. We hold what remains of it; it has passed for ever out of the hands of the barbarian; but the tide of battle still ebbs with sudden bursts of rage at its gates. To enter the city we must make a side detour. But before we do so, here is a village which, in the lottery of war, has retained its peaceful air and untouched perfection under the very muzzles of the German guns.

In the fields the women toil; the haymakers are busy; the great farm-horses wait, with their wonted quiet, for the burden of the day. In the streets a man stands with his little daughter of three in his arms, his face beaming with affection, his dog wagging his tail about his legs. There are roses still upon the cottage walls, and through the old door of the church there is wafted into the daylight the scent of incense, the voice of prayer. And yet there across the low valley, where that church spire cleaves the air, and that wood displays its contours, under that line of trees, there are sure enough the German trenches.

As we enter the proud old city, upon its threshold where the British sentries stand immovable, there rises, rich with its Gothic tracery, a convent whose roofs and walls have been torn by shells, whose interior is a scene of ruin. Wherever a shell has entered the building, there everything within its reach lies torn and twisted and broken, as if it had been seized with some terrible convulsion. The moulded ceilings, the white walls, the stained-glass windows, the chapel of the convent, the high altar—these are a total wreck. Only at the end of the apse, where there lingers a fragment of the roof, a figure of the Christ still stands serene and whole amidst the general desolation. In a side chapel a statue of the Virgin and the Child remains upon its pedestal, but some

freak of explosion has carried off both their heads.

We descend into the cellars, where some sick are lying, waiting for carriage to a hospital in the rear. They are still in their khaki uniforms and long coats, and they lie here exhausted and asleep, in the abandonment of fatigue, their heavy boots upon their feet, the iron on the heels glinting in the gloomy shadows of the vaults.

Below these again there are the dark Spanish cellars and secret ways, a whole world of underground intrigue that linked this place with St Eloi.

The story of the destruction of this convent is one of the most poignant imaginable. In the early days of the War it was the principal hospital of Arras, and the Red Cross floated from its steeple when the invader, singing a Bavarian hymn, tramped past it along the Rue d'Amiens. In May 1915, 1200 wounded were cared for within its walls.

In October of that year its destruction was decreed. As the first shells began to fall, all those who could walk were told that they could leave, if they wished, for Aubigny, seven miles away. The whole of the little colony of sick and wounded said they would go. They would rather die on the road, they said, than fall into the hands of the Boche. "It was a lugubrious flight," says one who looked upon it, "dreadful to contemplate. They went on their hands and on their knees; they rolled over down the stairs; they

took chairs with them as a prop for their broken limbs. Men with abdominal wounds, who had been obliged to lie absolutely still, dragged themselves along after the others. And this rather than submit to the mercies of the Boche.

"My eyes filled with tears as we wished them God-speed, for I knew only too well that many must die on the way. It was a moment of horror which I can never forget."

A small handful of the most grievously stricken remained. These were in so bad a state that the doctors would not risk moving them into the cellars. But the women who cared for them would not leave them to the more certain death upstairs. One by one these broken men were carried down by them at the imminent risk of their own lives.

"As we did so," says the same observer, "a violent explosion occurred; the glass fell about us in a thousand fragments. We thought the whole building was doomed. A blinding, but luminous dust enveloped us. I was covered with bricks and plaster. A bit of glass hit me, and my face was sheathed with blood. The wounded cried out in their agony. And then we heard above the tumult the clear voice of the Abbé Gengembre absolving us from our sins. Upon our knees, and with bared heads, we received this final benediction. But in the kitchen Sister Mary, the cook, went to and fro, attending to her duties with her wonted care as if Death were not

knocking at the door; on the upper floor, Madeleine Bracq, a girl of twenty, stood at the bedside of the wounded, in the midst of the falling shells."

The Roman soldier who died at the destruction of Pompeii was not braver than she.

In the following March there was a fresh bombardment. A "Marmite" hit the upper walls and penetrated to the basement. You can still see the path along which it came. Five devoted men and women were killed. The ambulance, which had struggled on so long, ceased to exist.

It was not till the 8th of December 1915 that the ruin of the spire and of the chapel was decreed. The German shells followed each other at two minutes' intervals; few missed their easy target, and in a little while the destruction was complete. . . .

One emerges from a place like this with something of a sense of physical pain. It is as though one had received a blow over the heart.

"Well, sergeant," said the General to the Irish Guardsman at the gate, "is it safe for us to go into the town?"

"Sure, ye niver know, sirr, what the devils 'll be at; but it's aisy they are this morning."

So with gas masks handy and steel helmets upon our heads—there is always the risk of being killed in Arras—we went down the cobbled street, through rows upon rows of shattered houses, to the Cathedral and the old Spanish Place. It was like going through a city seized with the

plague, or some other mysterious infection. The shops and places of business opening on the street were shuttered and nailed down with boards; the slates upon the roofs were shaken from their places; the window-panes were jarred and broken to bits; the walls were twisted and awry, and wherever a shell had fallen, there was a gap of ruin; what was once a home being new but a mass of matchwood, or a torrent of disembowelled stone.

And yet in the very midst of all these symptoms of disaster, there were evidences that the people had not wholly abandoned their homes. Outside one there sat a white-haired old lady of eighty, with her feet resting upon a stool and a parasol over her head—tranquil with the peace of those for whom death has no longer any sting. Let him come and find her if he would in the shadow of her own roof. This was her *Nunc Dimittis*. Outside another, in the shelter of a wall, a girl wheeled a perambulator with a new-born babe inside it asleep. There were even children playing in little groups at the street corners. But there were hardly any men, except the British soldier in his helmet of steel; and we found him here as cool and phlegmatic and as much at home as if he had never crossed the seas.

The Grande Place, with its superb Belfry, its ruins of old Flemish houses, its noble Hôtel de Ville, was an absolute wreck. The Pride of Arras was humbled to the dust. The

Belfry was the labour of a hundred years—the gift, not of a Prince, but of a people proud of their civic life and hard-won liberties. For four centuries it had dominated the Artois plain—its lofty Tower with its Crown, its heraldic Lion and its Golden Sun, a landmark to all the countryside, a superb example of the secular Gothic of its time. . . . Beside it the Hôtel de Ville rose, a rich and beautiful structure, in which the corporate life of the city had for generations found its expression.

It was on the 7th of October 1914—these dates are important—that the Germans, driven from Arras, resolved upon the destruction of these monuments. Incendiary shells fell thick upon the Hôtel de Ville; its roof took fire; its splendid interior, rich with old oaken wainscot and priceless tapestries, was seized by the eager flames; its mirrors and chandeliers cracked and were shivered by the heat; and the fires, leaping up to the Belfry spire, lit the wide landscape, across which the people of Arras were to be seen flying for refuge to the neighbouring villages.

The Belfry survived in a damaged state till the 21st of October, when the crime of its destruction was consummated. Sixty-nine shells were fired at it, and in fifty minutes the old tower, its carillon bells sounding for the last time, fell with its Lion and its Crown and its Golden Sun into the ruins of the

Place and upon the Hôtel de Ville.

The Emperor William is said to have looked from a neighbouring eminence upon its fall.

From this scene of cruel desolation we went to the Palace of St Vaast. This immense building, once a Benedictine abbey and episcopal residence, contained at the time of the bombardment the museum of the city, its library and pictures, its irreplaceable archives and 1200 manuscripts. It was gutted in two days. The shells were directed not only on the building, but, as those who laboured to save its most precious contents affirm, in the form of a barrage, designed to make the efforts impossible. Notwithstanding this, many of the most valuable objects were moved into the cellars and saved from destruction, but many were lost for ever. Of the 50,000 printed volumes in the library only one survives, and that, in the bitter words of one of the townsmen, was a rare little volume obligingly lent to Carlsruhe a short time before the War.

The Cathedral adjoining it, a vast structure with accommodation within it for 8000 people, was a ruin, more impressive now perhaps than in its prime. Its walls, with gaping rents in them made by the passing shells, were still standing; but the whole of the vaulted roof, with the exception of a single filament of arch, lay in fragments upon the floor. So vast

were the fragments that it was like climbing up a hill to advance across them to the depression in which the High Altar once stood.

The great gates of the Cathedral lay shattered, and their hinges and *débris* lay in fragments on the lofty stairs that ascend to the floor of the building.

This was the work not of one but of many bombardments. On the 5th and 6th of July the Cathedral was near its end. Its treasures had already been carried into the safest corner of the building, but there was no longer any safety there. The devoted servants of the Church laboured to save what still remained.

The Vicar has written an account of those tragic hours.

"It was near eight o'clock," he says, "in the evening of the 5th of July. But five of us remained. We carried behind the pillars of the Choir all the candelabras and chandeliers of the Altars, and then with much effort the beautiful but heavy statue in marble of the Sacred Heart. We would have tried also to save the statues of Joan of Arc, of St Francis of Assisi, of the Blessed Virgin; but the situation became impossible. The flames had reached the Vestry of the Canons, the smoke was asphyxiating, and the shells were bursting from moment to moment within the walls. It was half-past nine, and we could not stay.

"We carried upon our shoulders, as in a funeral procession, the great Christ of the Calvary,

and it saved our lives; for as we emerged two shells burst over our heads, and fragments of stones hit us as we passed before the gate-keeper's lodge.

"A terrible scene was displayed before our eyes. The Palace of Saint Vaast was in flames. The roof of the Parish Church was burning; clouds of smoke, sheets of flame, and showers of sparks enveloped the scene. The beams collapsed, the walls fell in. For the space of an hour the Germans poured upon the city incendiary shells, with the object of preventing us from limiting the spread of the fire."

On the 10th of July the dome and the roof of the Cathedral finally fell in, and the ruin was complete.

These were the principal buildings destroyed in Arras. It would be a long story to tell in detail of the rest: of the hospitals, the asylums of the old and afflicted, the convents and churches that bore the brunt of the enemy's chivalry.

But there is one little scene that is burnt into one's mind by its pitiless tragedy. We know what almshouses are in England. This was one for the aged, beside an asylum for the deaf and dumb. The most active of these old people had already been moved to the Chartreuse of Neuville, when upon the 30th of October 1914, in the early hours of the morning, the German guns were trained upon those who remained. This company of old and feeble people was assembled for the last time, preparatory to their departure, when a shell

struck the building. They were carried floor and all into the basement, in a horrible chaos of the dying and the dead. Thirty were killed and seventeen wounded. The spectacle, says one who saw it, was indescribable; and the Archbishop, who came over at the imminent risk of his life to solace the Sisters and these forlorn and broken old people, was so moved by it that he burst into tears.

The Archbishop of Rheims, writing from his own desolate city, addressed to the German people these solemn words, that will be endorsed by all impartial men—

“The assaults upon cathedrals, upon persons consecrated to the service of God, upon women and children, upon the aged and the wounded; the bombardment of open and unfortified towns, the incendiary

fires lit in private homes with inflammable pastilles: all these are crimes which you refuse to believe, because they appear to you to be unbelievable, and because they reflect dishonour upon the German soldier.

“But all these things are true, and every one of these crimes your soldiers have committed, not only with the consent of their officers but at their express command, in conformity with their theory of war. The barbarity of your armies is inscribed in letters of fire wherever they have passed; the vengeance of history will perpetuate the memory of these events, and humanity will never consent to forget them.”

And if any after this be in doubt, let him go to Arras; let him look upon the spectacle of woe; let him gather the truth from the lips of those of its people who still survive.

TANKS.

When these words appear in print, the Tank will have become as well known in its way as the Dreadnought or the 75. But at the time of my visit the Tank had just made its sensational *début* into the field of battle. People were laughing and crying over it by turns. The tears were from the Boche. The world was agog to know what it looked like, and curiosity about it was on edge in the allied armies. Raemaekers, the great cartoonist, whose pictures are of a faithful accuracy, depicted it as a snorting mon-

ster before whose progress the Boche was flying in terror. He was right about the Boche, but it was evident he had not seen the Tank. It was my luck to find the Tank at home, in the heart of a pleasant countryside, manœuvring and dressing for battle, and I do not think that I have ever in my life seen a more diverting sight.

It was a sleepy landscape upon which I gazed, with a faint autumn haze brooding over its woods and fields: here and there a hay-rick; hedges and secluded farms, where

children were at play and cattle pastured, and the slim farmers' girls, in the absence of their lovers, drove the great horses to the fields; and in the midst of this ancient peace, in a field shorn of its harvest, there was a company of the oddest creatures imaginable—Ichthyosauri for choice—grubbing about, and emitting from their nostrils a light-blue smoke like some poisonous exhalation.

I began to wonder if they were real things, or merely an illusion of the autumn mists. But they soon started out to explain themselves. Collecting together, they drew up across the landscape in line of battle, and, at a given signal, advanced towards me with a slow, ponderous, and inexorable movement that was like the march of Fate itself. Inspired, as it seemed, with some obscure but terrible purpose of offence, they came on, descending the steep ridges, marching with an animal-like action over the yawning trenches, leisurely, slow, and careful as Behemoth himself; climbing the low hills, going straight over high walls of sand-bags, plastering out barbed wire as if it were paper; unmoved by any external influence; slow, slogging, and determined; now in line, now in couples, with their great noses side by side; now coming on one by one; glowing in the sudden sunlight, swathed and enveloped in mists of lucent smoke, moaning internally, as they moved upon their course.

Add to all this the roar of battle, the bursting of shells, the splutter of machine-guns, the flash of explosions, the shouts and cries of men in the throes of conflict, "*Kamerad, Kamerad!*" the squeal of the deadly bayonet,—and you will have some faint idea of the amazing pitch to which Man has carried his passion for War in this year of grace, 1916 years since the advent of peace and good-will upon earth.

Even upon this quiet countryside, far from the noise and din of battle, with the farmers' children peeping through the hedges in spite of the mounted guards, there was something so impressive and terrible about these slow, strange, animal-like forms, so lifelike in their moving guns as they rose and fell and circled about like the projecting eyes of crabs; so melancholy in their moaning, as if they suffered from the pangs of a great thirst for human blood, that one stood spellbound and caught, as it were, in the toils of some by-gone evolution. The world seemed to be going back into the dark ages and civilisation to have failed by its own mastery over matter.

And yet the Tank, or "*Crème de Menthe*," as he is now familiarly known in the French army, is little more than the modern equivalent of the armoured knight; the men who live inside him are not less brave, and his power of movement is almost as circumscribed. Mechanically, he is put up to meet the machine-

gun, which the Boche used without pity or mercy against our human flesh and blood in all those early and long-drawn months when the supremacy in material lay with him. And it is characteristic of him to cry out now that the

tables have been turned. But the Tank has come to stay, and while he has his limitations and is far from being invulnerable, he will evolve in time into something much more formidable and effective than he is even at present.

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME.

“Cette révélation magnifique de la guerre: l’Armée Britannique.”

—*French Daily Paper.*

THE EVE OF BATTLE.

The Battle of the Somme has been in being now for nearly three months, and foot by foot, yard by yard, mile after mile, the Boche has been steadily driven back, evicted from his trenches, forced out of strongholds he believed to be invincible, killed in his tracks. Again and again have his counter-attacks been brushed aside. The end is not yet, but it is the beginning of the end. Of the dead that have been piled up on both sides, of the wounded who have passed through the clearing stations, of the millions of slowly-earned wealth that have been poured out in shells and guns and implements of war upon this small fragment of France, who shall adequately tell the tale? These fields have been watered with blood and paved with gold. And of the human record, the secret history of the soul, the anguish of broken hearts, who can attempt to speak?

But to-night at the Chateau which is for the moment one's home in France, all is peace.

The sky is clear and bright with the undying stars; the air so still that the faint trickle of water through the park, the cheeping of a cricket, are the only sounds. The music of War might never have been heard in the world. Yet there is War there sure enough, beyond that dark outline where the rolling countryside goes up to meet the stars. The great guns there are thundering and pounding away, and they will go on pounding and thundering away all through the night; and men are waiting there, some wakeful and some asleep, each after his own mood, for the big thing that is due on the morrow. Over there in England, under the green South Downs across the Channel waters, the night is broken to listening ears by the *boop, boop, boop* of these distant guns; and many an anxious woman turns restlessly on her pillow with the anguish of those who are afar off and can do nothing, though all be at stake. Many by to-morrow will have lost their all. But here, by some

mystery of sound, so near the battle-line, we can hear nothing. The night is tranquil as unbroken sleep, and to-morrow will be the sixty-seventh day of the Battle of the Somme.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

The Advance is timed to begin to-day at half-past twelve, and it is now ten o'clock. The Sun is shining through the golden haze of an autumn morning, bathing the long low valley, the yellow hayricks and the shorn fields, the rolling downs and misty woods, in waves of light. About us the women and the children of France are at work on the soil of their country, restoring by their ceaseless toil the insensate havoc of war. And yet for all their presence the countryside lies drained and empty. The men of France have all gone up to war, and we have the long white road almost wholly to ourselves. Carts and horses are few and far between, and private motors have ceased to run. Our only companions are the partridges, which rise up in flights before us, and sink with their customary grace into the oblivion of the quiet fields. To the English who hold this end of France with a great host of men the sight is a little tantalising, for the French will have no shooting while the war is on; and we love and respect the French. But we sometimes wish that they were less inexorably logical.

And here we are at the headquarters of General Haig, Commander of the greatest

army the British race has ever put into the field. You might expect a stir and movement in this neighbourhood: a brilliant staff; the coming and going of men; something of the splendour of War; the outward signs and manifestation of Power. There is nothing of the kind. The Chateau in which the General is lodged is half a farmhouse; its most notable feature a vast semicircle of granaries and haylofts and stables for cattle and horses. A single sentry stands at the gates, with the quiet air of the British soldier. Within there are flower-beds and lawns, and a waggon and horses are moving across the yard. Some French officers of rank are seated in the hall; the General is at work in his room. And as we wait here, as one might wait upon the threshold of a country-house on a hunting morning, an odd thing happens,—the very last thing you would have thought of in advance. An old lady with silvery grey hair comes up the gravel to the house, with a group of children about her; she mounts the steps to the door, the little boys and girls bow and smile, the aides-de-camp respond, and the whole party passes on through the assembled officers to the interior of the house.

In another hour to-day's

battle will begin, and four thousand guns will open their fire, as of hell let loose.

It is an unrehearsed effect, and it has a simple explanation. When the Commander-in-Chief chose this Chateau for his advanced base, he would not allow its occupants to be disturbed. He was content to share it with them. And so it happens that when he comes out of the big room where he works, where the map of the battlefield lies spread before him, and the fortunes of the day are told to him from moment to moment, it is the smiling little faces of these children that he is apt to see, and the sound of their discreet merriment that is carried to his ears.

It is a study in contrasts, but there is another which it is worth while to make in the interests of the psychology of this war.

"The German Staff," says M. Gabriel Faure,¹ describing his visit to the Chateau of Mondement a month after the Boche had been driven from the Marne, "were installed here in comfort, and it is possible that one of the Emperor's sons took part in the orgies of champagne, to which the piles of empty bottles heaped up in the yard bear witness. When our regiments dashed forward to the assault the Staff had barely time to escape, protected though they were by the Prussian Guard. Our troops

entered the Chateau —. I am shown the dining-room in which our Turcos found the table furnished with the finest vintages of the Chateau, the glasses still half full of the wine which the Staff had not had time to finish before they fled. Next to it was the Salon, where it seems that two officers, killed by the bursting of a shell, remained in the positions in which death had overtaken them,—one at the piano, the other playing the violin."

The door of the big room opens, and I am told that Sir Douglas Haig will see me. I enter to find a strongly built, resolute, handsome man of about fifty, his hair slightly grey, advancing to meet me with a courteous and friendly air. Upon the contour-map in *papier-maché*, which lies upon the table beside his desk, he explains to me the general position. As he does so, there is a characteristic movement of the hands, elucidatory, incisive. "Let us consider the matter; and then—let us get to the point," is their message. He shows me at once how we have taken nearly all the high ground, and driven the Boche into the less eligible valley. It is all very quietly done, but he gives one a top-dog feeling.

"You will go there and there," he says, "and you will see the attack we are delivering to-day on Thiepval, Gueudicourt, and Morval."

"Be careful, Sloggett," he

¹ 'Paysages de Guerre.'

adds, addressing the General whose guest I am, "not to go too far in that direction." And to me—

"Don't let him lead you into danger; he is much too fond of exposing himself."

This kind of solicitude for one's welfare is one of those things the non-combatant has to put up with, with the best grace he can muster.

It is a pleasant room in which these words are spoken, with big French windows opening on the sunlit green of the inner garden; and the man who speaks them is plain and simple in his speech, with just a touch of the homeliness one meets north of the Tweed,—a Scottish gentleman. Oxford man, cavalry officer, strong

leader of men, D. H., as he is known in the Army, has borne for the past twenty-five months his full share of the brunt of this war. We do not forget the part he played in those early days when the world was at stake, and "the contemptible little army" was fighting its great fight upon the left wing of France, nor the tribute borne to his leadership by Sir John French in those wonderful despatches that we know almost by heart; and it is generally felt here in France that we have in him the right stamp of man to force his way to victory. You have only to look at the line of his jaw, and the Scots tranquillity in his eyes, to realise that.

APPROACHING THE BATTLE.

As we draw near the Front incidents quicken, and the scene becomes one of increasing animation. Here is Albert, whose church stands shattered beyond redemption; while from the summit of its shell-riddled steeple the golden figure of the Virgin, dislodged from her pedestal, leans far over towards the earth, holding the infant Christ in her arms. It is as though in her own downfall she would protect her people from pain and ruin. So impressive is this attitude that a legend has grown up through all this part of France that she will not fall to the ground till Peace is declared.

As we stand here and look

upon her bending over the ruins of the town, company after company of Canadian infantry march past, the sweat upon their faces, their rifles in their dust-stained hands, steel helmets on their heads. *Tramp, tramp, tramp*, the sound of their measured footsteps fills the deserted and ruined Place with its echoes.

For my own part, I never see these people marching from the ends of the world to the edge and forefront of our battle without a deep emotion. There is a pretence across the Atlantic that Europe is worn with its old wars, obsessed with its ancient rivalries, that it knows not for what it is fighting. Let our Freemen

from the Australian seas, the snows and forests of the North, give the answer.

Far as we can see beyond the shattered town spread the British encampments: the white tents, the lines upon lines of dark cavalry chafing for action. The transport waggons fill the road, despatch-riders ride furiously past on their motor-cycles, infantry come marching up to the focus of battle. Guns lumber past, the gunners firm and hard-cut against the sky. The dust rises in clouds about us; the beauties of the countryside cease. It might be India, so brown and wasted is the landscape, so insistent the dust, so drab the prevailing note of colour. Hospital ambulances rumble past. The Pioneers are busy laying down new lines of rail towards the advancing front.

We are now entered into the territory won back from the Boche since the battle of the Somme began, and the lines of his captured trenches spread in a network of white on the hillsides, filled up already for the plough. His dug-outs and sand-bagged bastions line the road, and his barbed wire rusts in the autumn sun. These are the emblems of the great wave of Destiny that is sweeping on, slowly but surely, over the German field of war. All that he has taken from others will be forced from his greedy and blood-stained hands; and the time will come when the havoc and misery of war will engulf his own people and the homesteads of his Fatherland,

and the bitter penalty will be paid for all the wrong that he has done to others. The structure of the world would be meaningless otherwise, and the war a tragedy without relief.

The nearer we come to the battle-front, the more desolate and devastated becomes the landscape, and no imaginable destruction could surpass that which has overtaken the little towns and villages that once smiled here in this worn corner of France. At Monfalcone I have seen a town shattered by gun-fire, and at Arras a hideous destruction of beautiful things—an ancient town in ruins; but in all such places there still survive the lineaments of a place of habitation; there are still visible, if broken, the roads and squares; there are still streets upon streets of surviving houses, and in some there are still inhabitants. But here there is complete annihilation. All semblance of human settlements has vanished. There are no more any streets, or walls, or houses; nought but the earth, riddled and scarred and torn as if by some horrible disease.

"That," says the General, "was the Mairie, and that was the Church, and that was the village Place;" but *that* when you look at it is a heap of soiled mud and stone, or a hole in the earth littered with dead things, or something so nondescript as to be indescribable. And the woods that once graced the environments of

these settlements of men are the strangest spectacle of all. Gaunt and bare and stripped of their foliage; twisted and torn into fantastic shapes; burnt and blasted by the fire of the shells, poisoned by their fumes, they look—if they look like anything at all—like the dead wastage of a planet that has ceased to support any living thing.

And now—we are upon the very edge of the battle. We have come through Fricourt, where The King stood amidst the waste and ruin during his last visit to the Somme; passed Montauban and Mametz, which have ceased to exist; and the fury of the artillery battle is raging about us.

Conspicuous beyond any other feature of the conflict are the captive balloons, the *Drachen*, which swell in fantastic shapes and colours that vary with the incidence of light, in a great half-moon above our heads. The more venturesome are ringed about with incessant puffs of shrapnel from the German guns. Three thousand feet in the air, these floating posts of observation survey the enemy, locate his guns, mark the falling of our shells, trace the movement of men in the long lines of the enemy's trenches. And all that they see they tell of through the telephone wire, which is invisible in the sunlight, to the battery commanders and the Generals in the field. They look like fantastic, sometimes beautiful, toys; but in fact they are the eyes of the guns; and their

orescent line marks the wave of battle.

Beyond them the British planes fly low and defiant over the enemy's trenches, like eagles regardant of their hunting-ground, and wherever they fly they are followed humbly by the bursting clouds of the enemy's shells. But they fly on with a cool and hard indifference, intent upon their purpose, and it is manifest beyond question that in this air-battle we are supreme.

No German Fokker dares this morning to cross the British line.¹

About us rages the heavy British artillery. One says it rages, for that is the inflection of its voice, and in the roar of its music we cannot hear each other speak; but in the action of the men who fire these mighty guns there is no trace either of fury or haste. Each gun stands here with its black muzzle pointing towards the German lines, its pile of shells glistening in the sun behind it, and about it in masterful groups, the gunners, their coats off, their braces hanging at their waists, quiet, persistent, and utterly unmoved by the roar of battle. They work as if such a thing as danger or risk of death did not exist in the world. Beside them we can see, a little apart, the well-groomed figures of the officers—cool, erect, and observant. You will not find here any trace of haste; but you will not find here either any loss of time. Shell after shell is carried from the gleaming pile to the gun's breech,

and from instant to instant the vivid sunlight is painted with a flash of red flame, and the air is shaken with a fierce concussion.

And these guns are themselves an army; not by ones and twos are they reckoned, but by thousands.

Behind them, withdrawn with a sort of stately majesty from the storm of battle, are the mightiest guns of all, with their long black barrels pointing with a hungry menace towards the German front. Great is the roar of their voices, blinding the flash of their flame, swift is their sudden recoil, as they send their envoys flying through the heavens, to where the Boche believes himself secure.

We can hear, too, every now and then, through the heavier din, the sudden splutter of the machine-guns, where the advancing British are sweeping the enemy before them. There, in those zones of Death, the Black Marias and other German shells are falling in hundreds, sending up great clouds of dark smoke, and geysers of earth and stone; but here, where we stand, in the comparative safety of the second line, so complete is the mastery of our guns, so intensely is the Boche preoccupied with the urgency of our attack, that he has almost nothing to say. Yet is there a harvest awaiting him here, could he but turn aside to reap it. The road is crowded with men and horses and ammunition, with waggons laden with shells,

with ambulances and despatch-riders, and so great is the congestion of traffic that from time to time it is held up as in a London thoroughfare.

Along this road there come marching a dishevelled and broken company of men, the first of the German prisoners taken in this sector of the British advance. A couple of German shells might sweep the whole three hundred of them away, so closely are they packed along the narrow road. At their head comes a corporal of the Guards, with three Prussian officers who have surrendered to him. A cigarette in his mouth, his steel helmet at an angle on his head, the sweat and dust of battle on his brick-red face; he is in high feather.

"These here fellers," says he, "comes along and surrenders to me."

"Officers?" "Oh yes," as he casts a patronising look at them; "they're Officers. One chap there's got the Iron Cross, and some of our fellers wanted to take it from him, but *Discipline*, says I; you just leave that there sooveneer alone."

One of the captives still wears his heavy German helmet, the others stand with their close-cropped bullet-heads bare to the autumn sun. One is a spectacled person with a bandaged face, the other two big men of the bullying type—not gentlemen according to our ways of thinking—who are promoted for their animal strength and power to lead; and they show this in the half-defiant, explosive way in which they

reply to the General's questions. But it is evident that they have been much shaken, and the big man with the Iron Cross shrinks with a curious physical winoing from the General's hand, as though he feared a personal assault. But the General is chivalry itself.

"Quite right, Corporal," he says; "remember that they are officers, and see that they are treated as such; and look here," he adds, "you take my advice and put that Iron Cross of yours into your pocket, it will be safer there; and remember, we treat you like gentlemen, which is more than you do to our officers."

A look of relief sweeps over the man's face, he clicks his heels, and says "Yes, General," and removing his badge of valour puts it inside his pocket.

"Mustn't put temptation in

their way," chuckles the General. "That fellow looked as if he thought I was going to strafe him."¹

The corporal takes his leisurely way with his trio under his wing, and the main body of Prussians follow; but they are a sorry company of beaten and dejected men—no match for those to whom they have surrendered. Beside them march a few British soldiers, bayonets fixed, good-humoured, tolerant.

"'Ere, you blighter," says one, leaning over to the wounded man who marches beside him. "'Ere's a smoke for yer. What, yer ain't got no match and yer 'and's 'urt, is it? Well, blast yer, I'll light it for yer;" and with that he strikes a match, shelters it carefully from the wind, and, having lighted it to his own

¹ A correspondent of 'The Morning Post,' writing on the day of the battle, describes how he met these prisoners at a later stage.

"As the victors of Lesboeufs and their companions, the besiegers of Gueudicourt, kept streaming into the field ambulance, the road alongside their dressing-station held groups of forlorn wholly discouraged prisoners. Most of them were hatless; one or two wore their cumbersome sniper's helmet; one had on a British metal helmet. One group of perhaps a hundred Prussians—two hatless dignified officers among them—halted just beyond the field ambulance to rest beside the road. Then I witnessed what I think is one of the strangest scenes of this great battle. Curious but not unfriendly British soldiers grouped around the Prussians, looked at them, and even gave them cigarettes. The stout hatless lieutenant, who had commanded a company of the 240th Regiment, stood bolt upright in the centre of such a group, with his spectacled second-in-command—a slender beardless youth, whose head was bandaged—beside him. He was impassive, even dignified, quite cool, stiffly courteous in intelligible English when questioned. The ribbon of the Iron Cross was on his dusty tunic. A British soldier asked to see the Cross itself. The lieutenant gripped his tunic pocket and tightened his lips. 'Your General,' he said, 'told me that I should keep my—my'—(he searched through his rusty English for a word)—'should keep my little souvenir that I have win.'

"'Tell him we don't want it,' said the soldier to the other officer, whose English was less painful. 'We only want to look at it.'

"The young man explained rapidly. His companion looked less perturbed. He thrust his hand into his tunic and brought out the black metal cross he had received for valour. The soldiers fingered it curiously, and handed it back. Again the lieutenant held it up so that those behind could see, then thrust it back into his pocket."

satisfaction, transfers it from his lips to those of his late enemy.

This war is a hard war, that is going to be fought to a finish; and in those blood-stained trenches yonder, where Boche and Briton meet in the heat of battle, there is apt to be little quarter, especially when the Briton is a man with a bayonet from Overseas. But hereabouts, where the field has been won, the Boche is treated with a good-natured toleration and plenty of rough kindness.

"Why, bless your heart, they treat 'em like tame rabbits; make pets of them," says the General, laughing grimly at some of these incidents.

The Boche, as we know, does not respond in kind. Sixteen prisoners taken at Thiepval, as they came down the road in the care of two British infantrymen, suddenly turned on their captors and severely mauled them, and would have killed them both but for the unexpected arrival of help.

The prisoners pass on, but the battle goes forward with an increasing wrath. The air is violent with the crossing and re-crossing thunder of the guns; the wounded come trooping in with bandaged hands and feet and bloody heads; the R.A.M.C. ambulances fill the thoroughfares on their way to the Advanced Dressing Stations; dead horses lie by the wayside, a prey to the clustering flies; the ground under our feet is littered with the *débris* of battle and scarred with shell-holes. Beyond that wood the enemy's dead still lie

unburied. Every inch of the soil we stand on has been fought over in the great advance, and the landmarks about us—Longueval, Montauban, Contalmaison—are already an immortal part of the history of Great Britain.

Over there in London streets the newsboys will soon be shouting of the latest British victory on the Somme; of the taking of thousands of prisoners; of the fall of Gueudicourt, of Lesbœufs, of Morval; of the fight for Combles, of the gallantry of the Guards—Englishmen, Irishmen—(some-where ahead in that front of battle the Prince of Wales is "doing his bit"); of the decline in the *morale* of the Boche; but *here* these things are actually happening, and, even as we stand upon their fringe, the tide of battle is rolling forward, and the harvest of Death and Victory is being gathered in.

Beyond Montauban there grins the skeleton of Bernafay Wood; beyond it the path runs on for Guillemont and Combles, under the Bois des Trones. It is here upon the edge of the rising ground that we stand to observe the progress of the battle. Upon our right front, in a hollow, lies the fortified village of Combles; but so subterranean are these modern positions, that we can form no conception of its strength. A little beyond it, on our right, the French battle is going forward; we can hear the mitrailleuse, the rending music of the 75's; we can see the long avenues of trees on the Peronne-

Bapaume road, where our gallant allies are at grips with the Boche at Rancourt, cutting his connection with Peronne. Straight ahead of us lies Guillemont, beyond it, on rising ground, Morval and Lesbœufs; and it is there that the fierce fighting of the first line is in progress; that the bomb and the machine-gun, the hand grenade and the cold steel of the British bayonet, are murderously at work; and it is there also that the German barrage fire is concentrated, leaving us just behind it, immune. A thousand guns are pouring their shells into this portion of the Front alone.

Of the gallantry of our men, of the close and bitter fighting in that hell, of the deadly hand-grips of men who must kill or be killed, we can see nothing from here. Their record is told to the writers of history by the returning victors. But we can see the white seamy lines of the trenches, the black smoke-fountains of the falling shells, the sudden flame of the guns in the brilliant sunlight, and then from time to time the receding harvest of battle, the captives and the wounded. . . . The Dead we cannot see.

For all who are over there it is a great lottery; and no man who goes into the fight can be anything but a Fatalist. He is moved from one end of the battle-line to another at the will of a higher command; he is hit or not, killed or wounded, touched or maimed for life, under the blind play of Chance. There is a native valour which sustains men in

the hour of danger; a courage greater, or some physical reaction more intense, that inspires one man to deeds more daring than those of another; but there is also in these great battles of munitions and transcendent material forces the sure knowledge that there is little a man can do that will change or deflect his destiny.

Observe this congested road upon which these men are moving, these batteries beside it belching their flame and wrath; does any one here, I wonder, save the one or two who are free to retire, feel that he has any control over the business of Life or Death? He must know well that he has none. A blind Fate rules over all.

Even we realise this as a couple of isolated shells fall beside us in the blistered soil, flinging up great jets of earth, filling the air with their violence of sound. All the foresight, all the prudence and care that you and I, dear sir, take to arrange our lives, to secure this or that of happiness or prosperity, is here brutally negated. An insensate Fate drives on, heedless of whom it spares and whom it kills.

We had tea in a Field Ambulance tent, where upon the long deal table thin slices of bread-and-butter were cut and laid as neatly as when the demure maid brings the tea into an English drawing-room. Outside the ground was littered with "souvenirs," with trench mortars, unexploded shells, hand

grenades, and all the jetsam of battle. Through the open flaps of the tent we could see the dark columns of smoke, the silvery Drachens in the sky, the bursting clouds of shrapnel, and the sound that filled our ears was a sound such as has never before been heard upon this earth.

Yet even here the din of battle was abroad. Some of the heaviest guns were hidden here, their long threatening muzzles directed towards the enemy's lines, and the red sunlight grew redder with their flame, and the earth shook with their impact and music of sound.

It was here, too, that the graves of departed warriors lay like an army in line: Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Australians, New Zealanders, men of the North and men of the South, all lay here sleeping their last sleep together side by side.

"Ils ont voulu s'enraciner sur le sol de France. Qu'ils y demeurent à jamais ensevelis," said a Frenchman in the bitterness of his heart, as he passed these German graves.

But we must be gentle with the dead.

Such was the Battle of the Somme as I saw it in the course of one eventful day. Its ultimate impression that survives is as of some vast material force at work, some mighty organisation—of a war of munitions, transport, apparatus; but side by side with these mechanic things, inspir-

ing the Frankenstein monster with human passion and life, were a gallantry and valour unsurpassed—if they have ever been equalled—in the history of the world; cold and unmoved here in the second line; fierce and pitiless there in the couloirs and avenues of Death; genial and tolerant once the point of victory has been reached, the enemy beaten.

It was indeed the British spirit and temper that I looked upon; and as the men served the great guns with a leisured speed, moved without visible emotion into the fighting zone, returned with the dust and sweat of battle on their humorous faces, ignoring their wounds and indulging their enemies, I understood why, if we are slow at the start, we never fail to win at the finish.

The Boche saw our easy, tolerant, individual outlook on life, and in the pride of his jealous heart said he would overcome us by his cold and scientific organisation, the secret, devilish preparation of years. He would take from us the beautiful thing we had made, and besmirch our ideals with his own.

But he reckoned without the British spirit—just that fibre of individual thought and feeling of which we are made. And now that we have drawn up to a level with him in this matter of guns and mechanism, who can doubt, who has seen them together in these naked moments on the battlefield, that the Britisher is a bigger man than the Boche? We are beating him now at

his own game and on his own ground, and let no one harbour any doubt upon that point.

"The English," says he, "never lack the inexplicable spirit of Sport. Fighting to us is a Duty, not a sport, as most Englishmen take it, to our bewilderment." The hosts of the Great King were equally bewildered when they saw the Spartans combing their locks and indulging in games before the conflict that was to end their lives.

We propose, therefore, to retain this inexplicable spirit, believing it to be nothing less than the old Elizabethan sense of proportion—our hum-

orous antidote to the blind obsessions that fog the toiling mind of the Teuton.

"Endless streams of our men were coming up," writes an officer from the midst of the British advance, "anxious to be 'in it,' without a care as to whether they would ever come back. All around expressions of delight and confidence were flying about, and a jingling song was on their lips—

" 'We beat 'em on the Marne,
We beat 'em on the Aisne;
We gave them hell at Neuve Chapelle,
And—here we are again.' "

No wonder the Boche is bewildered!

MEDICAL SERVICES.

I suppose that we are all conscious of the primitive instinct, most evident in the gentler sex, which lays a greater stress upon the deeds of the soldier than upon those of the non-combatant—the destroyer rather than the healer of men. And we feel that there is some reason in it too, when we think of the greater risk, the heavier losses, to those who go up into the forefront of battle. Yet the tale of our medical officers and surgeons is a moving tale,

illuminated by many acts of bravery and self-sacrifice, the equal of those of the fighting soldier, and, in the cool scientific calculation of war, scarcely less contributory to the final victory.¹

It was my fortune during my visit to France to see a great deal of the Royal Army Medical Corps and the Red Cross and allied organisations, and without attempting any statistical narrative, which would be beyond the scope of these personal impressions, I shall endeavour

¹ In 'The Times' of October 4, 1916, Lord Northcliffe, in his able article on "War Doctors," gives the losses incurred by the R.A.M.C. from July 1 to September 30—three months only—as

<i>Officers.</i>		<i>N.C.O.'s and Men.</i>	
Killed . . .	53	Killed	260
Wounded . . .	208	Wounded	1212
Missing . . .	4	Missing	3

to say something of what I saw. Yet there is one statistic very greatly worth remembering, and that is, that the medical services in France under the control of Sir Arthur Sloggett, the Medical Commander-in-Chief, run to a force almost the equal of that "contemptible little army" which stood up to the Boche in his brutal plunge on France.

It was not my luck to see the regimental surgeon working in the forefront of the battle, the regimental stretcher-bearer going out into the hell beyond the trenches to rescue the wounded and help the dying. I cannot, therefore, say anything of their work, though I can form some conception for myself of the agony of those who, but for their devotion, might lie out there in the waste of "No Man's Land," their lives ebbing away, their throats parched with thirst, their bodies torn and buried under the *débris* of shell explosives. . . .

But all else that is connected with this great organisation I saw. I saw an underground dressing station in a world that was scarred and desolate with shell-holes, almost the only habitable place that survived, and so near the battle that it required something of an effort to emerge from it into the open light; I saw the wounded coming into the collecting stations, Boche and Briton together; the surgeons at work there in the din and roar of the artillery battle, and I said to myself if these men were not so busy attending to their own business they could tell one all

there is to know of a modern battle, better perhaps than those whose function it is to describe such things.

I saw the motor ambulances rolling up to the very edge of the battle, crowded in the narrow ways with ammunition waggons and guns, exposed without any possibility of escape to the risk of being hit. I saw the Corps Collecting Stations, where the most urgent operations are done, and a man's chance of life or happiness hangs on the skill and swift accuracy of the surgeon's hand; and behind these again the Casualty Clearing Stations, where the khaki-coloured Ambulance Trains were waiting to carry all those who could be moved to the great Base Hospitals by the sea, and over the water to England.

Here those who were not yet fit to travel lay worn with pain and weariness, being ministered to by the comforting and gentle hands of women, with flowers by their beds, and pictures to cheer them on the walls, and books and papers to read; while outside under the tent-flaps, or in the lee of the hospital huts, amidst the flower-beds and the grass, were those who could lie in chairs under the open sky.

Of the many pitiful sights I saw—the Gas cases struggling and drowning for the lack of breath; the wounded with their white faces, their amputated limbs, their harsh abdominal wounds, their faces bandaged beyond recognition; of the dying, who could never again look upon their homes

or say their last words of farewell to loved ones,—of these I shall not attempt to speak. Yet one who would know what war is like must see these sights, and learn for himself, as the surgeon and the nurse do, the pity and the devilishness of it all.

Happily for one's faith in the power of good over evil, it is just here and at such moments that one is brought into fellowship with the redeeming qualities, the patience and fortitude of the afflicted, the tenderness and devotion of those who care for them, and the charity of the thoughtful, who, though they cannot see, can understand. Wherever I went I saw Ambulances, Hospitals, Apparatus, the gift of individuals and societies; books, papers, "comforts"; all those little things that we are apt to smile over when we see the earnest busy over them at home. But let us not smile at them again. Let us remember that in this matter of the War Everything Counts.

If you cannot go up into the line of battle yourself, you can help with your money; and if you haven't money, you can render personal service; and if even that is impossible, you can give your thoughts and your feelings. Amongst these women who were content to work here amidst these wearing and pitiful scenes, to perform every menial function that the helpless can require,—even for those who had killed their own flesh and blood,—there were many who had been

trained to a very different life, women of refinement, of title, of means; amongst these surgeons, whose identity was lost in the universal khaki, were eminent surgeons whose names are famous in England and the Empire, able and rising men who had left their homes and their practices behind them; amongst the rank and file of the Hospitals were Peers working as common attendants; well-known and wealthy people on the Stage dealing out stores or brushing out dormitories; "Sun-dried Bureaucrats," who had earned by years of exile in hard climates the peace and quiet of retirement, hiding their light under the bushel of the hospital menial.

All these people, in their own quiet, unassertive way, were busy here setting a shining example to those who still fail, whether from thoughtlessness or the lack of imagination, or downright, cold-blooded selfishness, to bring their tribute to the common cause.

My journeys carried me so far over this wide corner of France that is become, by the best of ties, a corner of England. I saw so many scenes that in ordinary times would have left an indelible impression upon my mind, that I find it a little difficult to disentangle one from another, and to give those who read these pages anything like a clear picture of what all this hospital business means. It was like an army within an army, a world in itself.

Here, if you wish to see it,

by the wayside, under the shattered church of St Eloi, is a Clearing Station, within reach of the German guns. A hospital orderly is at work quietly sweeping the floor; the warm autumn sunlight is invading the long room in which the wounded are lying; the nurses are busy smoothing their pillows, easing their maimed extremities, helping them on the difficult road by their womanly voices. The surgeons are gathered outside, snatching their momentary rest,—men of the same fibre as those who are fighting beyond the hill in the trenches of Neuville St Vaast.

Here, in a field, is a great fleet of Motor Ambulance Cars, drawn up in reserve, to meet the needs of the next big push. They look like live things almost in this quiet corner, with the sun sinking in a splendour of gold beyond the trees, an aeroplane returning over their heads from the battle to its place of rest.

Here, moving like a gilded shuttle through the darkness of the night, is a long khaki-coloured train with its red-cross emblem, symbol at once of pain and compassion. Put yourself in the place of one of those poor fellows laid out there, and think for a moment of what he has gone through to be there, of what the rest of his life may be.

And here from this hill-top overlooking the sea is a view that reminds me of nothing so much as the Delhi Durbar, so far-spread is it, so wonderful in its improvisation. Here

are thousands of tents and twinkling lights; beds for thirty thousand sick and wounded men. If you go down into their midst you will find there all that is meant by the good word Organisation; all that prevision and money can buy for those who have deserved well of their country. Extravagant? not a bit of it. Nothing can be too good for them. The only extravagance is that of those who live at home at ease.

And here, too, side by side with them, you will find the enemy, cared for, looked after, just as though he was not an enemy at all. I do not know what they do over there in Bochelard with our sick and wounded; but if they seek to discriminate, let them remember that we are good to their people—that Chivalry still exists here on this side of the battle-line.

Here is a German ward. The first patient is a Prussian officer with an amputated leg. In spite of the pain and loss of blood from which he has suffered, his will is still resistant; his replies to the General's questions short and resentful; his body big and powerful. Next to him there is a lad of eighteen, also a Prussian officer, very white of face, feminine in his youthfulness. A Volunteer, he says, who joined the Army straight from school. Next to him a small man from Baden, who lies with a quiet stillness and a mute appeal in his eyes.

"Puir laddie," says the homely Scotchwoman in charge of the ward, "he's slowly dy-

ing; paralysis of the spine. He's a good laddie, and gives me no trouble."

At her elbow stands a soft-faced Saxon, a medical student, who is well enough to move about the wards and act as a help and interpreter. No warrior this, and very glad, says he, to be finished with the War.

In a tent by themselves there are some cases of sickness, dysentery and so forth. They are looked after like the rest, but there is not much sympathy to spare for the sick man in this ward; rather hard on him when you come to think of what sickness means, and what it must mean above all to the brave man out of the fight. A little way off, in the midst of the mundane charms of Le Touquet, is the Duchess of W——'s hospital, a *hospital de luxe*. It is lodged in the ex-Casino, and is reserved for British officers. The Duchess "does her bit," looking after the bed-linen and helping in the X-ray room. You can have tea there and admire the water-

colours painted by the V.A.D. nurses—when they are not busy nursing the wounded; and when you look down from the late music-gallery upon the white ballroom, the refinement and luxury of its equipment, the bright flower-beds and lawns warming themselves, like the convalescents, in the bright sunshine, you realise that you have come a long way from the surgeon's tent on the battlefield, with its mud floor and its canvas stretchers; farther still from the hell of No Man's Land, where the regimental stretcher-bearers move amongst the shells.

One more scene, and it is in the little seaport town where the Hospital Ship is waiting to carry its freight across the Channel "back to Blighty." Evacuation, evacuation, that's the idea; to move on with all possible speed and care the wounded from the bottle-neck of the Front to the ever-widening base, till the hunter is home from the hill and the exile is back in his home.

ODYSSEUS.

(To be continued.)

INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

THE great war in which we are engaged has taught us some lessons, and it has emphasised many facts which were previously overlooked. Some of the facts were clearly perceived by a few, but most of us were so obsessed by the idea that our participation in a great European conflict was impossible, that we went about our business as though the peaceful conditions of the past fifty years were stereotyped in perpetuity. There is little to choose between the two great political parties in respect of the sacrifice of agriculture in the interests of industrial development. Since 1846, when the Corn Laws were repealed, agriculture has, in the main, been left to shift for itself. Helped by the good prices of the Fifties (Crimean War) and Sixties (great increase of gold), farmers did well even without fiscal support, but the tide set strongly against them in the Seventies. In that decade prices of all commodities were depressed by the commercial collapse that followed reckless speculation. The seasons too were bad, the harvest of 1879 being one of the worst on record. But the outstanding feature of the Seventies and Eighties is the great increase of the imports of wheat from North America. This forced prices down to a ruinous level, and compelled farmers to withdraw wide areas from arable cultivation and lay them away

to grass. The area under permanent grass in Great Britain amounted in 1916 to $17\frac{1}{2}$ million acres, as compared with less than 13 million acres in 1873; while the area under tillage shrunk in the same period from a little over 18 million acres to less than $14\frac{1}{2}$ million acres. The land under wheat was reduced in these forty-three years from about $3\frac{1}{2}$ million acres to less than 2 million acres—that is to say, the area in 1916 was little more than half what it was in 1873. Practically all tillage crops showed a greater or less degree of shrinkage, the only exception of importance being potatoes, which increased their area from 515,000 to 558,000 acres, a result no doubt due to the fact that this food-product is comparatively free from the competition of imports.

With an increase of $4\frac{1}{2}$ million acres in the area of permanent grass in the forty-three years preceding 1916, one might have expected a corresponding increase in our flocks and herds. But this has not proved to be the case, for whereas cattle have increased by a million and a half, the number of sheep has decreased by $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions, and the increase of a million and a half of cattle of all ages cannot be considered as more than the barest compensation for the loss of three times as many sheep. Horses in 1916 were more numerous by 291,000 head than in 1873,

but the pig population had contracted by 186,000. The broad fact, therefore, emerges from these considerations, that in the forty-three years preceding 1913 Great Britain lost about $3\frac{1}{2}$ million acres of tillage crops, including $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres of wheat, and produced no more meat, though no doubt she produced a larger quantity of milk. This shows that it is a fallacy to suppose that tillage farming and stock-keeping are incompatible, and gives point to the contention that we may largely increase our area under crops and still keep as large a head of stock, or larger.

Our present position in respect of food is that we produce about one-fifth of the wheat we consume, something more than half the meat, a quarter of the butter and margarine, a fifth of the cheese, and nearly all the milk. It is in regard to wheat that the position is so unsatisfactory, and it is not pleasant to contemplate the fact that this country can only feed itself with bread for ten weeks. There is general agreement in the opinion that a great effort must be made not only to recover for wheat the area that has been lost since the early Seventies, but also to raise the production per acre.

There has recently appeared in this country a Memorandum issued by the Board of Agriculture, showing what our chief enemy, Germany, has been able to do in the way of increased food production

during the past forty years or so, and, with the German figures, there are contrasted the corresponding English returns. The progress made by Germany is certainly very striking. Taking the average of the five years 1883-87, and comparing this with the period 1909-13, it is shown that the German wheat yield per acre was increased from 19·8 to 31·6 bushels (60%); barley rose from 22·7 to 36·7 bushels (62%); oats from 25·7 to 44·6 bushels (74%); potatoes from 3·4 to 5·4 tons (59%); and meadow hay from 22·5 to 33·7 cwt. (50%). During practically the same period our wheat yield per acre increased from 29·5 to 31·2 (6%); our barley, oats, and potatoes remained stationary; while our meadow hay dropped from 26·1 to 23·1 cwt. per acre—a loss, namely, of 13%. Whereas thirty years ago the yield of wheat per acre in England was about 50% above that of Germany, the German yield is now as good as ours. Thirty years ago our yield per acre of barley was 43% higher than the German; now Germany surpasses us by 12%. At the beginning of the same period our relative production of oats was 51% higher than the German; now we are surpassed by 14%. Formerly our yield of meadow hay was better than theirs by 16%; now theirs is better than ours by 46%. It is only in potatoes that we have been able to hold our own, in which crop our yield per acre surpasses that of Germany by 15%.

It was only to be expected that the increase per acre of crops generally would be greater in Germany than in this country, for the reason that Germany started from a lower level of production. On the other hand, a greater increase than 6% was to have been looked for in our wheat yield per acre, for these amongst other reasons: (1) The shrinkage in the area meant the abandonment of the least suitable land; (2) manuring is now more intelligently conducted than was the case in the Eighties; (3) new varieties of wheat of high yielding qualities have been introduced in the interval. Any one of these causes might have been expected to produce 6% increase, so that our actual progress is distinctly disappointing.

The great war had proceeded about six months when our Government realised that it was desirable to make an effort to produce more food in this country during the continuance of the war. Three Committees were therefore appointed—one for England, another for Scotland, and the third for Ireland—and about July 1915 these three Committees duly reported. It may be interesting to abstract the chief recommendations of these Committees, remembering that the suggestions are for emergency action during the continuance of the war, or for a short time thereafter.

The recommendations naturally fall into four groups:—

Crops, Manures, and Cultivation.—The extended use of

motor tractors for ploughing, cultivating, and hauling was advocated; and it was suggested that public demonstrations of such machines should be held in order that farmers might become better acquainted with their advantages. There have been difficulties in the way of obtaining delivery of new machines and implements of all kinds, and one hears complaints of the restrictions on supplies of petrol; but still there is no doubt that many more motor tractors—many of them American—are at work to-day than was the case two years ago, and there is no question as to their labour-saving possibilities.

Attention was directed to the advantages of cultivating vacant plots of ground, such as building sites, and a considerable movement in that direction has taken place. Sometimes a definitely organised Food Society has been formed to work the land on co-operative principles; at other times an enthusiast has induced those with an hour or two of leisure per day to utilise their spare time in raising vegetables for some war charity. No doubt such action is all to the good, though the aggregate effect on the production of the country cannot be regarded as considerable.

The Scottish Committee suggested that increased production could be immediately secured by the cultivation of improved varieties of crops. Much attention has been given to this subject of recent years, and field demonstrations, espe-

cially in Scotland, have proved that some of the newer varieties of oat and potato are capable of furnishing a yield much in excess of that of the old sorts. Intelligent up-to-date farmers are well aware of the advantage of giving attention to high-class seeds, and it is well that the subject should be brought to the notice of their less progressive neighbours.

Both the Scotch and English Committees recommend the breaking up of grass land and its conversion to tillage. With the present difficulties in respect of labour no effect can be given to this recommendation. As a post-war development the reduction in our area of grass land is a vital necessity, about which something will be said later.

The English and Irish Committees thought that a great stimulus would be given to the growth of wheat by the guarantee of a minimum price. The Irish Committee did not suggest what the minimum price should be; but the English Committee mentioned 45s. per quarter, to be continued during the war and for four years thereafter. They had hopes that such a guarantee would add a million acres to the wheat area of 1916. The proposal, however, was rejected by the Government, on the ground that the submarine menace was sufficiently in hand to secure the passage to this country of foreign and colonial produce.

All the Committees recommended that exports of the only two home-produced artificial manures of any consequence

—namely, sulphate of ammonia and basic slag—should be controlled, so that farmers might be assured of full supplies. This also is a subject about which I shall have something more to say presently.

The more extensive use of artificial manures generally was advocated, but as these substances, with the exception of the two already mentioned, are all imported, the difficulties of freight have so restricted supplies that farmers have no opportunity of extending their use of these substances.

Live Stock.—The extension of pig-breeding was recommended, the pig being an animal capable of rapid increase and quick maturity. It is in Scotland that the need for such advice is most urgent, as the pig has never been a popular animal in that country.

Previous to the war, Germany had secured something of the nature of a monopoly in certain cattle foods, notably various forms of nut which come from Africa, and it was recommended that steps should be taken to secure for British farmers the use of these highly nutritive substances. The result has been that imports of nuts and kernels from French, Belgian, and Portuguese West Africa rose from 9000 tons in 1914 to 40,000 tons in 1915.

At an early stage of the war the Government put restrictions on the export of home-produced feeding-stuffs, like bran and other corn offals, and it is the general opinion that such restrictions should

be continued, and the materials be converted into home-grown meat and milk.

Estate Management.—The following recommendations were made by one or other of the Committees:—

The relaxation of restrictive covenants in leases in respect of cropping.

The granting of special facilities to tenants in regard to killing rabbits and foxes.

The encouragement of the destruction of rats, sparrows, rooks, and wood-pigeons.

The encouragement, and even compulsion, by landlords of their tenants in the direction of better farming.

The grazing of deer forests by sheep and cattle.

The discouragement of artificial game-rearing.

In regard to the suggestion in respect of deer forests, it may be said that they are practically confined to Scotland, where they cover about $3\frac{1}{2}$ million acres. While many descend to the coast, much of their area is at a high altitude, and probably it would be a liberal estimate to put their stock-carrying capacity at one sheep on ten acres. But, even so, the deer forests, if cleared of sheep, would furnish grazing for 350,000 head, which might furnish annually about a million pounds of wool and three million pounds of meat.

Artificial game-rearing is chiefly confined to pheasants. The process involves the employment of a relatively large

amount of labour and the consumption of valuable human food, such as hard-boiled eggs. Although most landlords, game tenants, and game farmers have ceased to rear since the outbreak of war, it is to be regretted that the practice is still continued on some estates. I came across a case last season where a game tenant had 15,000 young birds on a rearing-ground practically within sight of a military hospital, which was hard put to it to find eggs for wounded soldiers. I accidentally stumbled on a similar case in another county, where, however, I failed to ascertain the extent of the rearing, though it was evidently on a large scale. Such action at the present time is so thoroughly out of harmony with the spirit of the nation, that it ought to be suppressed by law.

Advice and Guidance.—It was recommended that Committees should be set up in each county, in order to stimulate action and to direct effort towards improved production. The result has been the formation of County War and Advisory Committees, which have concerned themselves with such questions as women's labour, military labour for agricultural purposes, the supply of labour-saving machinery, the development of motor traction, &c.

The supply of information and advice with regard to seeds, manures, cultivation, &c., by the agency of county and local College Lecturers, was generally recommended,

and has frequently been given effect to.

The Irish Committee recommended Government loans for the purchase of implements and machinery to be used by small farmers on a system of co-operation.

While it is of great importance that food-production should be maintained at as high a level as possible during the war, it is the post-war problem that wants most thinking out. By some means or other this country must produce more food, and there is no doubt that a large increase is quite practicable. One knows exactly what is wanted—namely, a larger area of wheat and of tillage crops generally, and a greater number of farm animals, with the more rapid maturing of the individual beasts. It is, however, one thing to know what is wanted, and quite another to know how to get it.

The matter also is complicated by considerations of time, and this again is intimately associated with the kind of peace that we shall secure. If the peace that emerges from the war is the kind that may be called "durable," then we should have a long period during which to put our house in order, and a certain line of action would be justified which might be quite unsuited to the kind of peace that is generally called "armed." Many believe that the conditions that will follow the war will not be those that are associated with a permanent peace, and that

the necessity will be great to rearrange our economic and social existence in the shortest possible period of time.

Suppose, to begin with, we set before ourselves the modest object of securing an increase of a million acres of wheat, or, what is the same thing, three or four million additional acres of tillage land, cropped in such a way that one-third to one-fourth is under wheat. Many favour the idea that such extension would be secured by guaranteeing to farmers a minimum price of 45s. per quarter for wheat. But as wheat is a crop of quite subordinate importance in Scotland and Ireland, presumably a corresponding minimum price would have to be guaranteed for the chief food corn of these countries—namely, oats. 45s. per quarter is a very attractive price as compared with the pre-war rate of some 30s., but it is a small price compared with 70s. or more that farmers are getting for their wheat at the present time. A minimum price has the attractive feature that its guarantee might cost the Treasury nothing, as would be the case if the market price remained at or above the level that was fixed. Besides the question as to whether the country would consent to the guarantee of a minimum price, the further question arises as to whether it would secure the extended cultivation that is required. That is a question that is hard to answer, but at least the opinion may be

hazarded that the result would not be secured at once.

The suggestion that farmers should receive a bonus on all grass land that they put under the plough is in some respects more attractive than the idea of a minimum price. Whereas the latter would affect all grain, the bonus on the conversion of grass land would be paid only on the area that was a definite addition to the existing tillage land of the country. No doubt there would have to be safeguards that the land was farmed up to a reasonable standard, but that should not be difficult to secure. France has recently decided to stimulate production by giving a bonus on land cultivated for 1917 that was not under tillage for the crop of 1916. This bonus amounts to 20 francs per hectare, or about 6s. 9d. per acre. If we assume one acre in four to be sown with wheat, this is equivalent to 27s. for each extra acre of wheat. This is in addition to a bounty of 3 francs per quintal—say 5s. 6d. per quarter—on all corn harvested in France.

There is one way in which an immediate and large increase in production can be secured, namely, by the use on British land of the whole of the sulphate of ammonia that is produced in this country. This substance is a bye-product in the manufacture of gas, coke, shale-oil, &c., our annual output being normally over 400,000 tons. In 1915 our exports of sulphate of ammonia amounted to 294,000 tons, of

which foreign countries took more than 266,000 tons and British Possessions less than 28,000 tons. For 1916 the export is likely to be about 250,000 tons. The question is: Can the suggestion be substantiated that British land can advantageously absorb our present exports of this fertiliser? My view is that it can. One cwt. per acre is a standard dressing, although for some crops as much as 2 cwt. is applied. The wheat crop of the United Kingdom occupies about two million acres, oats covering about double this area, and these two corn crops alone could utilise all our exported sulphate of ammonia at the rate of less than 100 lb. per acre. But this manure is equally suited to root and hay crops, and if it were used on, say, one-fourth the area under wheat, oats, roots, potatoes, and hay, it would only suffice to supply 60 lb. per acre. There is, of course, some land so rich that it does not require to be stimulated by sulphate of ammonia, but that there is much that would profitably respond to its use is evident from the poor crops that one too often sees.

The wheat area of the United Kingdom is not of sufficient extent to absorb our exports of sulphate of ammonia, but on whatever crop it is used an increase would be produced that may be represented in terms of wheat. At a moderate estimate a cwt. of sulphate of ammonia will produce 4 bushels of wheat, 6 of oats, a ton of roots, half a ton of potatoes, or

a quarter of a ton of hay. In terms of wheat, 250,000 tons of this manure would produce $2\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters, and this would mean an addition of more than 30 per cent to our present home-grown supplies.

If, as I believe, our whole production of sulphate of ammonia can be used at home, it follows that for every cwt. of sulphate of ammonia we send abroad we have to bring back 4 bushels of wheat, or an equivalent amount of some other food. The shipping involved in this operation may be put at 800,000 tons, and this must be difficult to find in these times, and the operation may be none too simple even after the war. Exporting sulphate of ammonia and importing a corresponding quantity of food also results in a serious adverse trade balance. We sell 250,000 tons of sulphate of ammonia at £16, 14s. per ton, and receive, say, £4,175,000. We buy, say, $2\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters of wheat, or some equivalent food, at 70s., and pay £8,750,000, leaving a deficit of £4,575,000 to be liquidated by gold or other exports. The case for the stoppage of the export of sulphate of ammonia is enormously strengthened by an examination of the Board of Trade returns for nitrate of soda. In 1915 our imports of this substance exceeded 130,000 tons, whereas, judging by the figures for the first eleven months, they are not likely to exceed 30,000 tons in 1916. Making allowance for re-exports, Britain in 1916 has suffered a loss of about 50,000 tons of this valu-

able fertiliser, as compared with our position in 1915. The significance of these figures is apparent when it is remembered that nitrate of soda and sulphate of ammonia are, from an agricultural point of view, interchangeable substances. The latter, however, is the richer manure, 75 lb. of sulphate of ammonia being about equivalent to 100 lb. of nitrate of soda. It follows, therefore, that the drop in our imports of nitrate of soda in 1916 must either have been compensated for by the use of sulphate of ammonia, *beyond its use in 1915*, of 37,500 tons, or our land has suffered a corresponding reduction in fertility. But as we know that the Government has not secured an equivalent extension of the use of sulphate of ammonia, it is evident that the productivity of our land has suffered most seriously in consequence. Nor, without strong action, will the case be better in 1917.

Simple as it would be to utilise our exports of sulphate of ammonia on British land, it would be still easier to find land for the 40,000 tons of basic slag which was exported in 1916. This manure is chiefly used on pasture in doses that may be averaged at 5 cwt. per acre. Our annual export would therefore all be absorbed by 160,000 acres, or one acre in 125 of the permanent pasture of the United Kingdom. Five cwt. of basic slag will, on a modest estimate, produce 100 lb. of meat in five years, so that the 40,000 tons spread

on British fields would produce 16 million lb. of meat, or 3,200,000 lb. annually for five years. Here, too, considerations of freight and exchange are in favour of stopping export.

In no way can an increase of food be so certainly and simply obtained as by using basic slag on second-rate and inferior pasture. And such increase makes a special appeal to us during the war, for it involves a mere fraction of the labour of men or horses that is necessary to deal with an equivalent area of tillage land. It is to be hoped that after the war we shall see second-quality pastures broken up and put to the growing of corn and other tillage crops, but there can be no better preparation for such a change than the present treatment of the pasture with basic slag. Clover, which is stimulated by this manure in a remarkable manner, fixes nitrogen from the atmosphere, so that pasture which is slagged is greatly enriched indirectly, and when it is broken up the tillage crops get the benefit of the accumulated fertility. The Scottish Committee were so convinced of the advantages of applying basic slag to grass land that they made the subject the first of their recommendations.

If it be agreed that it is desirable to secure a large addition to our tillage area, and that it is possible to increase production by the use of that portion of the sulphate of ammonia and basic slag

which we at present export, the question arises: How are the objects to be secured? Given time—say 20 or 30 years—and I do not doubt they would be secured by the operation of such stimuli as a bounty on tillage land, or the guarantee of a remunerative price for wheat and oats, and by education in its widest sense. Just before the war the country was settling down to take advantage of the system of Education and Research in Agriculture which had at last been provided on a considerable scale. The pioneer work, started about 1890, had in a measure prepared farmers to embrace the extended opportunities for applying science to agriculture which were the outcome of the Development Act of 1909; and when a normal life is again resumed, the machinery is in existence for improving production by the aid of education and science. Then, again, landlords are realising as they never did before that the ownership of property carries with it far-reaching obligations. It may be anticipated that, after the war, the relationship of landlord and tenant will be closer than before, and that there will be a greater number of instances of effort on the part of the landlords to organise schemes of co-operation, profit-sharing, local classes and lectures, and the like. Farmers who are not managing their land up to a reasonable standard will have to get special attention, and, as a last resort, will have to make room for better men.

On October 30, at a meeting of the London Farmers' Club, Captain Bathurst, M.P., is reported to have spoken as follows:—

"Most landowners had bad tenants as well as good. The good landlord would take care that his estate yielded its maximum production, and if not he would take steps to make it do so. The most natural step, however unpleasant, was to get rid of all those who were obviously under-farming the land. He was going to adopt that rule, however unpopular it might be. He believed the bulk of agricultural land was under-rented, and suggested that when a farm became vacant the rent should be raised to its economic value. He would also raise it to every farmer who was under-farming, if with no other object than to get rid of him at the earliest possible moment."

Action of that kind, on a considerable scale, will no doubt cause appreciable unrest, and is sure to be misrepresented by vote-catching politicians; but many farmers will be none the worse of a good shaking up, and a few "examples" will have a salutary effect in a district. Much land is under-farmed because the occupier holds more than his capital warrants, in which case a measure of subdivision seems called for. Others have large holdings at so low a rent that they can make as good a living as they desire with a minimum of exertion. I speak rather feelingly about such cases, because

I run a farm in a southern English county whose productive capacity has been trebled in the past six years, but no adjoining farmer, occupying similar naturally poor land, has put into practice methods which he sees operating alongside his boundary.

If I am right in my opinion, that the needs of the country for a large increase in home-grown food will not be met quickly enough by voluntary effort, then there is nothing for it but some measure of compulsion. When one walks over a farm that is clearly producing much less than it is capable of, one would like to have the power to order the occupier to mend his practice or suffer penalties. Some have suggested that the penalty might take the form of differential rating; others, that subdivision of large holdings, and the concentration of the same amount of capital on a smaller area, would help to secure an improvement. The idea that incompetent farmers should be displaced by better is attractive, but as the supply of good farmers is not sufficient to "go round," it would follow that, in the last resort, the State would have to be prepared to take the land into its own hands. This postulates a large supply of competent farm managers, who may not be available, and, in any case, the State has never shown itself to be an economical farmer. Compulsion along these lines does not, therefore, appear to be a very hopeful proceeding.

A more promising line of advance would be to set up local Committees, who would be charged with the duty of deciding which farms in their district can profitably use, we will say, sulphate of ammonia and basic slag, and in what quantity; and the farmers affected would have to obtain supplies. Or the Government could take over the whole output of these substances, and let farmers have supplies at such a price as would cover the cost, with a reasonable allowance for interest, till the crop or stock was marketed and the debt liquidated. Alternatively, farmers affected by a decision of the local Committee might be given the right to apply for a Government loan, the security being the crop or stock.

Then, as regards the breaking up of grass land, a similar course might be pursued. The Government decides, we will say, that the area under arable cultivation in the United Kingdom must be increased by four million acres, about 25 per cent, with a corresponding reduction in the area under grass. The local Committees, being informed how much must be found in their respective districts, would proceed to schedule the most suitable fields. But most farmers, when they knew what was expected of them, would make their own decision in regard to which field or fields they would break up, and a wide discretion might be allowed so long as the land was found.

Objections can, no doubt, be

urged against this, or, for that matter, against any other scheme. It may be said, for instance, that if the State dictates how a man shall farm, the State must indemnify him against any loss that may result. It does not seem that it would be consistent with full individual effort that the State should relieve farmers of their financial responsibility, but it should certainly give them some measure of protection. The State does not hesitate to impose stringent conditions on the public in the interests of public health, and surely national safety is at least of equal importance. A builder may not erect dwellings according to his own will and pleasure, but has to conform to local bye-laws, the observance of whose conditions increases costs and reduces profits. A dairy farmer must, in the interests of the community, provide a certain cubic space for his cows; he may have to incur expenditure on a water supply, he must periodically whitewash the walls of his cowhouses, he must get rid of animals that the officer of the Local Authority condemns, and he must see that the milk he sells is up to a certain standard. The observance of these conditions necessarily means outlay, and must reduce profits, but it is not therefore suggested that the State should indemnify the farmer against loss. Or, take events that are every day happening in our midst. Men are being taken for the Army with the certain knowledge that their business or profession will

be non-existent on their return, and although great hardship and loss are recognised, the national necessities of the country are deemed to override all private interests. It is no answer to say that what is right in war may be wrong in peace. To make preparations in time of peace for the supply of food in time of war involves no more inconsistency than does the maintenance of an army after peace has been signed. But, of course, the production of the maximum of food from British land is not primarily a war measure at all. It is an economic necessity whose advantages would scarcely be lessened if the armies of the world were disbanded to-morrow.

Did space permit, there are other aspects of the subject of increased food production that might be discussed. Some look for a solution of the problem in the creation of small holdings. Personally, I am not impressed by the small holding as an agency in increasing the national food supply. The subdivision of land to a limited extent brings certain obvious advantages: it increases the opportunities at the disposal of the labourer for rising to a more independent position; it is a means to increase rural population; and it stimulates the production of minor products—such as flowers, honey, eggs, vegetables, and the like. But in regard to the production of the major part of the people's food—wheat, oats, potatoes, meat, and milk—small holdings, as compared

with ordinary farms, are a hindrance rather than a help.

To sum up: there are these three main lines of approach to the goal that we all desire to reach. First, we may depend on education, in the widest sense of the term, to improve the farmers' practice. This would cover academic instruction, research, local lectures, advisory committees, expert advice, leaflets, field demonstrations, co-operation, Government aid in the supply of pure-bred live stock, technical literature, patriotism, &c. That is the line we have followed in the past, and it has synchronised with a constant shrinkage of our tillage area. There is, second, the stimulus of improved profits by means of import duties, a minimum price, or a bonus on the conversion of grass to tillage. Countries which give fiscal protection (*e.g.*, Germany and the United States) are also quite as active as free-trade countries in respect to the supply of education. Our experience seems to prove that education alone, even in its widest sense, will not give us the increase of food that we require. We have had no recent experience of the action of direct financial help and fiscal protection, but there is no doubt that the first and second agencies combined will effect a great deal more than the first alone. It goes without saying that if the State guarantee of price, or a system of bounties, goes far enough, and if farmers have an assurance that such a policy will

be persistently followed, self-interest will see to it that the goods are delivered. But will the country grant such aid to agriculture, and even in this event, will the conditions that follow the war vouchsafe the time necessary for it to effect its purpose? If not, then some measure of compulsion seems inevitable, and its justification must be sought in the magnitude of the issues at stake.

Farmers are no more selfish than other sections of the industrial community, but some of them want reminding that the land which they handle is the prime agent of production, and, as such, their control over it carries great national responsibilities. It is to be doubted if many farmers have, in the past, thought much about this aspect of their business, though

there has been healthy personal rivalry in regard to crops and stock. As a farmer myself, I quote with some diffidence a passage from Professor Daubeny's *Lectures on Roman Husbandry*: "Agriculture, Cató begins by remarking, is preferable to merchandise, as being less hazardous, and to usury as being a more honourable occupation. Whilst our ancestors regarded a usurer as more degraded even than a robber, they considered it the highest honour that could be paid to a citizen to call him a good farmer, and indeed the best soldiers and the bravest citizens have ever been taken from the cultivators of the soil." This is a character that British farmers should be encouraged to merit.

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TALES OF A GASPIPE OFFICER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'ADVENTURES OF A DESPATCH RIDER.'

Military cyclists are popularly known as the Gaspipe Cavalry.—*Daily Paper*.PART II. WITH THE IRISH DIVISION (*continued*).

IV. BACK AGAIN.

I.

YOU may have read¹ how, for many soul-destroying months, the Irish Cyclists prepared; how at last the Channel was crossed in a lively gale; how after certain adventures they detrained one wet night ten miles from the nearest Boche; and how, struggling to the top of a rise against a testy head-wind and a flurry of rain, they saw the lights of the Line and heard the guns.

Away from the hissing flares, the banging of the trucks, the long-winded shrieks of the French engines, the weary shouted orders, the mixed smell of horses and stale food and wet coal; from all the cheerful but hurried uproar of the station, it was dark on the road and lonely. They did not know whether the guns were near or far. Sentries, their shoulders covered with shining capes or waterproof sheets, stepped out from nowhere and challenged mysteriously. Their guide, too, hesitated, and once turned back, saying the road was dangerous. The tired men thought that this black night they might be

led along perilous tracks fringed with sniper-ridden trees. The youngest officer dared not strike a match for fear some Hun should take a more careful aim. It was the Front.

If the Gaspipe had realised how they felt and had seen fit for the moment to stop explaining to the guide the character and ultimate abode of guides, he might have pointed out that even in the bad old days Fritz had never penetrated ten miles behind our lines. But the Gaspipe was longing for billets and the day.

The guide, a sergeant in that stubborn corps the military police, had murmured at the station how exceedingly lucky it was that he and not an interpreter was to lead. He knew the country like a book, day or night, wet or fine.

"We don't want to see *all* the country," it was urged; "not all of it—only just that little bit on either side of the most direct road to our billets."

But the guide was an errant humourist. He led them along nightmare and roundabout

¹ In the March number of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' 1916.

roads, protesting that he used to cycle a bit as a boy himself, and that all other roads were dangerous. Finally, when he trotted gallantly into a village suspiciously like a village they had ridden through half an hour or so before, he remarked with a horrid laugh that the longest way round was the shortest way home.

At four in the morning a feeble and dispersed column of soaked and weary cyclists, led by a maddened officer and a subdued guide, halted outside a mean and filthy little village. An apologetic interpreter came to meet them with the news that billets had been carefully arranged for a third of their company. The remaining billets were occupied. The Gaspipe looked at the sticky mud on the uneven cobbles and at the shabby farms. He smelt the smell, then discovering the truth from the interpreter, said joyously—

"This is indeed France. Where is the *estaminet*?"

Some sort of shelter was found for all the men. The officers crowded into an *estaminet*, where a weary little dark woman, without a word of complaint, bustled round and made them steaming hot coffee, cut them bread-and-butter, and showed them where they could sleep. . . .

They rose late, ashamed of the night's fears and eager for bold adventures; but the village at first chilled them. Surrounded by fields of black mud, the dirty little houses, for the most part almost farms, irregularly fringed

a narrow street of *pavé*, slippery with evil grease. The rickety barns were filled with the effluvia of drying clothes, ordure, tinned stuff, stale cooked food, and rifle oil. The dripping midden-heaps, subdued by the slow, persistent rain, thickened and poisoned the air. From the kitchens escaped the faint blue smoke and everlasting odour of frying fat. The dingy *estaminets* were like empty glasses of bad beer into which worse coffee had been poured. All the roads from the village were streaming and polluted and covered with a smear of viscous mud. December in the country behind the Loos salient is never pleasant, and Houchin is the dismallest village that ever was.

But the Irishmen were singing and laughing with the excitement they could not suppress; and when the General walked in to tell them that his car was stuck a mile away, the cheeriest party set out to dig under it and drag it out with ropes.

Then word came that they were to move up nearer to the Line, in order to repair some old trenches. There were shouts of joy. Nearer the Line was nearer the Line to them, even if to the initiated work on third or fourth line trenches does not appear to hold the elements of hilarious or romantic fighting.

So the next morning they started off, and halting to verify the road, watched pass a battalion of infantry from

the trenches—infinately weary but half-smiling men, wholly covered with mud and chalk. Some had bound sackcloth round their legs to above their knees, some were limping quickly in a desperate effort to keep up—all looked strained and beaten about. It was the Cyclists' first sight of war.

Finally, they came to a large group of mine buildings, and Cicero was sent to see the *corons*, or workmen's cottages, in which the company had been ordered to billet. Of course they were full; but with tact and energy cover was found for the men in the lamp-room, the engine-room, attics, and tents.

II.

An officer once told me he had refused an interesting, well-paid job at the Base, because he "wanted to see it through, and could not leave it now." The cynic will say he was not in the infantry. True, for he commanded one of those odd units that lately-arrived infantry subalterns, who do not understand, are inclined to treat with condescension and envy. The man did not want to see it through because he had been comfortable and safe. In the unbearable first winter of the war he had existed for forty days in the first line without once going down a communication trench; held a 300 yards' gap with two machine-guns and no ammunition; lived for days together on casualties' packs and water that was nothing but distilled essence of dead men. He had been through these noisome, incredible months, the like of which we shall never see again, when we had nothing except endurance, and the German everything except victory.

First, there is the fascina-

tion of the game. Old hands who have seen the drama unfold cannot go away until the curtain has been rung down, in case they should be called upon to play again a part upon the stage. The story of the great marches, the early open battles, the holding of a tenuous line against overwhelming numbers and skill and ammunition, the desperate futile attempts at premature offensives, the pouring of shells and men into the country, the slow but remorseless change from inferiority to equality, and from equality to the definite fact of being superior to the enemy in everything that counts, the industrious preparations for the first of the big successful attacks, the launching of it, and the sagging and cracking of the whole German line—that is a story which must thrill and amaze those who *read* its chapters. Think of the old hands who have not read but taken part. Can you wonder that they want to see it through?

Then some of us have a

curious perverted affection for the forlorn country from Loos to Ypres. Down south we have not seen and do not know. It is the line from Loos to the north that holds memories. In Maroc, that red-brick wilderness of shattered villas and workmen's cottages, with their hidden mysteries and broken, sprawling mines and factories and rectangular overgrown gardens,—do you remember, Schnapps, how the Gaspipe came through squalid Les Brebis on a sunny morning, how he climbed up the rickety ladder to look at the Hun, then walked along the rural trenches from which you can see the sinister Double Crassier, the great rusty belt of German wire sidling up the hill to the craters above Loos, the peaceful village and huge tangled metal-work of the mine buildings? We have gazed very often at the little city of vermilion roofs, the three gaunt elevators, and the big shining white tower of the Metallurgique. And the trenches—the dismal stretch of sodden, blood-stained, roughly piled sand-bags west of the Sunken Road—or when we went looking at the fire steps in front of the Chalk Pit Wood or behind the Hulluch craters? Go north of the canal. It is something to have been in Violaines, to have seen Givenchy and Festubert and Richebourg St Vaast before they were touched by shells. Now you must look carefully in the rank grass for the foundations of the *estaminets* that

two years ago were brigade headquarters. Those officers who sometimes enter Béthune may try and imagine the morning on which the inhabitants turned out to watch curiously the first English troops they had seen press hurriedly through to secure the left flank of the French. Farther north, it is a long time since a brigade selected Cockshy House, not far from Laventie, and found the Germans had stolen the spoons; since the first shell startled Neuve Eglise; since that abominable bit of road near Dranoutre was repaired; since French headquarters were at Dickebusch; since we went looking for a piano in the chateau at Vormezeele; since cocktails were sold in Ypres; since we used to think Poperinghe the safest place in the world, and go for tea to that best of *pâtisseries*; since the Boche experimented with gas-shells on the chateau at Boesinghe. It is good to go back to these towns and villages and inns even in their desolation. It would be better to return, as we shall, to that cake-shop at St Quentin and the view of Mons from above Athis. . . .

Sometime in the distance, when by the mint-beds of the Windrush you wander lazily and dream a vague dream of the old dim war, you will see and understand what now would surely repel any man—the sights and sounds and smells of the country behind the Line. The long straight roads with battalions marching, and the

strings of lorries with the smell they leave behind of petrol, hot grease, and dust; the dilapidated little French carts, the dainty motor ambulances, and the old men in blue tunics and steel helmets slowly repairing. You will remember how you wondered whether you ought to salute that car—there was a flash of red. Then the towns swarm with mess carts, and limbers, and officers on horseback, and any number of odd, aimless men. The stuffy, brightly-lighted *coiffeur* is always crowded, and ruled imperiously by Madame's harsh voice. Officers are carrying bottles and tins and boxes from the canteen to their limbers or carts. Farther forward all the billets are numbered and ticketed. It is a cold wet evening, and the men, who a moment ago marched in singing, are wearily tramping round in small groups under their corporals looking for the barns or the sheds where they have been told to sleep. . . . The villages are full of lazy, lounging men, resting or in reserve. You will not have forgotten all the little notices: "Washing for officers and soldiers"—"Eggs, chips, beer"—"English beer"—"Teas, eggs, butter, chips"—"Officers' Tea Rooms"; mingled with "D.A.D.O.S."—"C.R.E."—"C. Mess"—"Pioneer Stores," and all the rest of them. Off the muddy roads are always parked transport and horse-standings, stout but flimsy-looking sheds, with the muddiest cart tracks in the world. Farther forward still

are the shattered villages. Innumerable wires fringe and cross every road and track. Hidden batteries appear in odd places, and great heaps of wire and timber, bombs, and stores miscellaneous are scattered everywhere. Little graveyards and odd graves lie serenely by the roadside. Then in a rough country lane or in the middle of some collapsed mine buildings, you came to a newly-painted board—"SOUTHERN UP." You used to enter the trench here, walking carefully on the slippery boards and smelling that deathly earthy smell, and so to that trench, which is like all other trenches except that sentries are looking through periscopes.

Such a catalogue of facts must fail. What you remember of the sights and smells is perhaps the swollen, green body of the fellow who was gassed, or the acrid fume and dull near thuds when you walked down a communication trench between batteries that were firing "gun-fire five seconds," or the stench of frying fat and stale coffee in the kitchen of your billet, or the rush and clear singing of little bits, the thumps of flying clods, the scream, the curse, and the cold, queasy feeling in the stomach when the Boche opened on your trench. But perhaps even a catalogue can help those to understand why some want to live it through. . . . And in Flanders, mud, rain, and cheerless weather are looked for, because fine weather in Flanders is a strange state of affairs. . . .

V. ODD JOBS: AND SOME MINOR ARTS.

I.

Cyclists in France have a Past and a Future but no very glorious Present. They look back with longing at those great days when they held on for that extra quarter of an hour to cover the retreat of the Division's rearguard, or when, advancing, they pedalled merrily ahead, rounding up all the odd Boches who might lurk behind hedges and in farms, to the confusion of the blind infantry, and occasionally engaging in cheery little actions with obstinate rearguards. The Cyclists then were like terriers, snuffing round in the highest spirits. One day, the Cyclists tell you, the Boche line will break. Only the ignorant infantry, with their parochial ideas on the eternity of trench warfare, believe that peace will be declared with the Germans at La Bassée. Great, disconnected armies will retire eastward sullenly, or perhaps the enemy will go back to a second line for a start, leaving rearguards. . . . Then the terriers will come into their own again, snuffing, biting, and yapping at Fritz's dignified heels, smelling out machine-guns and mined roads, drawing woods, clearing farmsteads. Infantry think in yards, Cyclists in miles. If ever the infantry are to advance in column of route, somebody must see that the long column does not find itself in company that it would prefer to meet in quite another formation.

Meanwhile there are odd jobs to be done, all sorts of odd jobs, some in the front line and some behind it. The Cyclists must keep fit for the Day.

Perhaps infantry may read what I write. So let me write this. The Cyclists may do now those little jobs for which you have no time or men. They may not now "go over the top" or spend all their time in the trenches—though some battalions must remember how a few platoons of stout, cheery, and always willing men came to give them a hand—but let the infantry never forget that without the Cyclists the Great Retreat would have been a blacker nightmare than it was, that without the Cyclists the Great Advance would have been less rapid than it was, that in October of '14 it was the Cyclists who rallied the infantry when the Germans broke through at Violaines.

So every morning Fitz, the Babe, or another pushed along the *pavé* into Nœux-les-Mines, between the slag-heaps, to Mazingarbe, and on to those curious out-of-the-way places where second and third line defences run, or along the railway track to the bumpiest of all roads, or through mean Saily-Labourse. They stacked their cycles neatly by the roadside, marched across clinging plough to some rakish old trenches, and set to work building up traverses, resur-

resting fire-steps, exhuming dug-outs, thickening parapets, until the trenches looked no longer rakish but neat and good and new, even if laid out on rather an old-fashioned plan. Expert advice and untruthful information were provided copiously and for nothing by a sapper sergeant.

It was all novel and tremendously exciting—and occasionally shells did come their way. One night the Babe returned with a tale of how a big shell had exploded just off the road, covering them with mud. A solitary shell is just a solitary shell, but to this band of Irish warriors it was the beginning of a new life: it was the reason for those weary months at Mallow, Ballyvonare, Ballyhooly, Fermoy, and Pirbright. . . .

The Gaspipe going his rounds would find Fitz and Bill in pipes and shirt-sleeves remaking with deliberate care a model bay, Cicero would be holding forth on the theory of revetting, or George, looking very chilly, would be marching stern-eyed up and down outside the trench. Brady D., the wit of the company, leaning gracefully on a spade, with his sallies would be encouraging the others to work before going off to find an abandoned dug-out in which to read a pink paper at his ease.

Just in front were two big guns. Some days the gunners would fire them, but every day two servants under the eloquent and enthusiastic instruction of the Colonel were

planting things that never grew. I went back a year later to see.

Three miles away against the sky were the houses of Maroc on a slight ridge that, crossed by the Lens road, stretched away to the northward. The ridge was covered with a delicate tracery of white lines—the rearward chalk trenches of the salient. Between the slope and the working Irishmen was a big mining village, often shelled, dominated by a black pyramid of a slag-heap. If you examine that white tracery of used and disused trenches carefully you will see that one line runs parallel with the crest of the ridge and just below it. That is the old German line. Two or three hundred yards nearer is another line, the old British line. You are looking at the battlefield of Loos, for Loos itself and the Chalk Pit Wood are in the valley beyond the ridge, while the next slope is Hill 70. Or again walk out in front of the big mining village and turn to your left. That low black squat thing is the monstrous Dump, those earthworks the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and far away, glistening pink in the sun, is the shattered ruin of Givenchy church.

The Babe and his fellows had nothing yet to do with trenches. They only knew of them as dangerous places to be avoided. But, lest your appetite should have been whetted by the sight of the rearward trenches of the Line, later I will take you through

those trenches and tell you all about a battle, of which you probably know nothing, fought on the field of Loos.

II.

Repairing old trenches, with a shell or two dropping near every few days, is a gentle introduction to the lesser arts of war. The Irishmen learnt that the report of a gun and the explosion of a shell, though both loud, are not necessarily similar—that if you stop your work to watch the “Archies” the work will take a long time to do—that sappers are not always truthful. They began to know the different kinds of gun by sight and by noise. Soon they were finding their way with tolerable ease amongst that complex organisation which lies hidden in ruined houses and chateaux and mine buildings. They started to read the *communiqués* with eagerness and discuss them with an expert knowledge. They brought back from quartermaster’s stores and other such temples of truth the most incredible and fantastic rumours. They were fed to satiety with stories of the battle of Loos, which had scarcely finished its ugly course when the Irishmen arrived in France. Soon the gloss of newness was replaced by a veteran roughness and understanding.

Never look as if you were going to fight, is the warning for the novice. A revolver is carried only in the front line trenches, and not always there. Staff officers stroll round the

trenches wearing an immaculate Sam Browne devoid of military ornament. That is the fault of stationary warfare. In some safe and pleasant mansion the G.S.O.I. of a Division enjoys an excellent lunch and smokes a good cigar. The car comes round at half-past two. At half-past six he returns, and an hour later sits down to a dinner even more excellent than his lunch. Yet between dinner and lunch the G.S.O.I. may have been within 100 yards or so of the Boche. Why carry a revolver? The chance that you will meet a German while you are taking a laborious walk round the trenches is microscopic. You require only a stick, a gas-helmet, a steel helmet, and a small flask.

The history of steel helmets differs from that of revolvers. If an officer were to spend a few days or nights walking from one end of an Army front to the other, it would be the most consummate good fortune if he met a German, but he would be quite certain to meet a number of shells, grenades, Minnies, and bullets sufficient to test his helmet. Yet, unlike the French, whose *paveurs*, or road-menders, are equipped with picturesque casques, the “tin hat” is rarely worn except when in, going to, or coming from the

trenches. It is a protection useful in certain localities, not a universal article of attire. The old days, when officers wore something because it was comfortable and efficient, are gone. Immediately you leave a communication trench you must be neat and smart and like everybody else. There are still exceptions. Robinson,

a Brigade-Major, used in the Somme to stroll up to his Advanced Brigade Headquarters in slacks, carrying habitually a few bottles, just as, a year and a half ago, at Wulverghem, every man—be he guide, servant, or relief—used to carry up a piece of wood and a sandbag or two when he went to the trenches.

III.

The Cyclists were billeted in and near a large group of mine buildings. The officers lived in some streets of small workmen's cottages. Settling down, they all learnt to know a little of the people in the north of France and to respect them greatly. All the men have gone. Only women and grandfathers and boys remain. It is impossible for those at home to picture a country in which there are no men of fighting age left, for in France the net is cast very wide. There are practically no exemptions at all,—but the old men, the women, and the children still carry on. Doddering ancients turn from slippered fireside to guide a plough. Boys struggle desperately and successfully with sowing-machines that were meant to be managed by two grown men. Labour is replaced by overtime. Everybody goes out into the fields when it is still dark; and riding home in the dusk, you can hear, even if you cannot see, the machines and the people working in the fields.

Remember, too, that a foreign if allied army has been billeted on the country since October of '14 without respite. We pay well, but soldiery, if no longer brutal and licentious, are thoughtless and a hindrance to those already unfairly handicapped.

The Irishmen found themselves at home. They were Catholic, and many of them workers on the land. They were welcomed by the kindly, cheerful old French priests—all the young French priests had been called up—and possessed, it would seem, a dim ancestral bond with their hosts. They made friends more quickly and more warmly than any English or Scottish soldiers. Before they had been a day in the place O'Reilly was helping to carry the water, Paddy had an eye to the children, and Mike with his arms on the fence was breathing sweet nothings to the laughing, working daughters.

The Gaspipe was billeted with Mme. Detrenne. There were two little clean bedrooms in the cottage, one for him and

one for Madame and the four children. Downstairs, you went through the kitchen into a small parlour full of ornaments and wax flowers and photographs and certificates of the prowess of Corporal Detrenne, who it appeared had won many cross-country races and given abundant satisfaction to the authorities. Madame was a curt, energetic, middle-sized blowsy woman; but the work of the house was done by Detrenne's sister. She was tall, finely built, with large eyes and a wealth of dull brown hair. She lived in another cottage, but spent all her time tending the children, more particularly Robert, who, having reached the age of three, objected loudly to breeches between the hours of four and six, and could only be stopped by the big officer coming into the kitchen and flashing his electric torch. Robert would stare open-mouthed, then chuckle delightedly and try to catch the beam of light. The women were overflowing with kindness. If they saw the officer looking cold they would dash in to make a fire. If the lamp was burning ill, they would bring him multitudinous candles. The only trouble was that once a week Detrenne's sister took a bath in the kitchen, an unusual custom that Madame never imitated. Then, if the Gaspipe wished to enter the parlour, used as an orderly-room, he would find the door barred. If there was no urgent reason why he should enter, he would smoke a philosophic pipe outside. If

some Army Form or paper had to be found immediately, he went on knocking. Then, after an interval, Detrenne's sister would unbar the door and disappear upstairs for a moment in a flurry of draperies and dull-brown hair. The Gaspipe entered his orderly-room and came out quickly, or shutting his door with a loud bang, enabled Venus to return to her bath.

One night, rather late, Fitz was in the parlour with the Gaspipe when a French soldier entered the kitchen. The Gaspipe was expecting the interpreter, so Fitz, who speaks wonderful French, went out, welcomed him, and taking his overcoat from him hung it up. Detrenne laughed, murmuring politely that so courteous were the English they hung up your own overcoat for you in your own house. Fitz came back with a blush, tactfully shutting the door. Now this is war-time and the north of France, so there were no effusive shouts and gesticulations behind the door. Detrenne and his wife greeted each other with the quiet affection that novelists so feelingly attach to the meeting of Jack, who has just come back from big-game shooting and James Dickson, his father's friend, who persuaded him to try Nairobi instead of suicide. The *Nord* is very nearly as undemonstrative as the north of England, and patronises the *Midi* with the same contemptuous indulgence that your Lancashire lad uses towards the

dull but flighty inhabitants of the south of England. . . .

In a few minutes the door was opened, and Detrenne came forward to ask us if we would do him the honour of sharing a bottle of wine. Fitz had to go, but the Gaspipe remained to sip the good red wine and talk of the war.

Detrenne was a quiet, bearded, wiry man of forty, holding the rank of *Adjudant* in the infantry—a rank slightly higher than that of Regimental Sergeant-Major. He had walked some twenty miles from the trenches near Arras, but did not seem tired. Although he had been in many battles from the Aisne onwards, he would not talk of his own exploits. His *Legion d'honneur*? It was a mere nothing! As *M. le Capitaine* would realise, one could not serve for so long without meeting “the chance.” And if one did not take “the chance”—pouf!—it was one’s own fault. If one did—well, one thanked the good God for the opportunity. No, he would prefer to talk of the big guns of the British. The rumbling and the growling of the British big guns in the north was very cheering. When the wind came from the north and the thunder was more distinctly heard, they smiled at each other in the trenches, murmuring with a significance—*Les Anglais!* The British bomb was good too, but the *soixante-quinze* . . . ! Yes, he had heard that 18-pdr. shrapnel was marvellously effective. . . . So they talked into the small hours of the morning,

while Madame sat quietly by with shining eyes, sometimes quietly interrupting with a word of explanation, sometimes endeavouring to force Detrenne to speak about himself, sometimes translating, because she was now acquainted with the vile accent of *M. le Capitaine*.

In the morning Detrenne put on an old coat and spent an hour or two pruning his favourite roses. Then he slipped down to the *estaminet*, while Madame remained at home working with Detrenne’s sister, both cheerful, singing a little, and demurely proud when the neighbours came to call.

Eight days later Detrenne put on his greatcoat, took up his stick, quietly kissed his wife, and walked back to the trenches—twenty miles. . . . The children seemed a little fractious that evening, and, when the next night Mme. Dupont heard that her husband had been killed, Madame looked strained and anxious; but Detrenne’s sister, who did most of the work, was as calm and unruffled as ever.

So the Irishmen learnt that if an officer takes the trouble to find out a little about the people amongst whom he is living; if he pays them the ordinary small courtesies of French life; if he realises that, though the women may seem a little extortionate in their charges, they are only trying to make their stewardship a success while the husband or the son is fighting; if, when the officer comes in to a billet in

the evening he does not expect Madame, who during the day has done more than two men's work, to be in the sweetest of tempers—he will consider himself indeed lucky that the war has set him down among such honest, kindly, clever people. . . .

Jackson has lived for twenty months between Béthune and Laventie. At four o'clock he returns from visiting his guns in the Line. *Maman* makes up the fire. Jackson takes off his boots. His socks are seen to be wet. She beseeches him to go and change them. *Papa* enters from the field. Jackson describes the trenches accurately but crudely. They all smile in sympathy. . . . After tea Jackson comes down into the kitchen, chaffing Adrienne, a fine handsome girl of seventeen, who counter-attacks with vigour. Julianne, the pretty, conceited little "flapper," who has come from La Gorgue to help with the potatoes, laughs self-consciously. Louis, the small boy who is doing a man's work in the fields, intervenes loudly, to be sternly squashed by *Papa*. Then they settle down, Adrienne to mending Jackson's socks. *Maman* stands, as always, with folded arms over the stove. Julianne

and Louis are grinning at each other. Jackson, who can do anything with his fingers, is sewing Louis' initials on to pillow-cases, under the hilarious criticism of Adrienne, or discussing the contents of that excellent little paper, the *Telegramme*, with *Papa*. There are the old family jokes, "*Péronne n'est pas prise*," and exclamations of "*beaucoup peur*" when a gun is fired; full of resourceful humour is our M. le Commandant Jackson, and full of good tales and local gossip. He knows how Mme. Guyot, who has the big house over by La Vallée, is really a carpenter's daughter of Richebourg, although she always pretends she came from Paris. He knows how Mme. Carette across the way hates officers' servants in her kitchen, and what Adèle's brother is doing. He can tell you funny stories about M. Bogart, the cheerful wine-merchant of Laventie. He hates the Boche, as any northerner should, and sometimes, though his French is not Parisian (and all the better! What is Paris compared to the stout people of the Pas de Calais?), he brings out a word of *patois*, "*Ha, Adèle, chinq¹ sous pour la bière!*" . . .

¹ Pronounced "shank" = obviously "cinq."

SOME REFLECTIONS ON A FAMOUS ANONYMOUS "LETTER."

BY MAJOR-GENERAL R. MAHON, C.B., C.S.I.

IN the latter half of the eighteenth century a host of writers took the utmost liberty which the law afforded of publishing scathing invective of the most personal nature aimed against the character of persons who, for one reason or another, had incurred their displeasure. Parliamentary procedure admitted no public reporting of the opinions voiced by the members, and interpellation of the Ministers on questions of public importance was not yet a system. Anonymous writing brought to a fine art instructed the public mind, and even influenced the fortunes of those attacked.

The Letters of Junius, those appearing in the 'North Briton,' and many others under various signatures, have become famous, not only as examples of style, but as political documents of importance. The authors of the majority are unknown, and it has for long been an interesting object of literary research to collect evidence of their identity.

Among the anonymous letters which have acquired notoriety, one of the earliest appeared on the 23rd September 1760 in pamphlet form, "printed for J. Burd, opposite St Dunstons Church in Fleet Street"; it

was entitled 'A Letter to an Honourable Brigadier-General, Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces in Canada.' The person attacked was the Honourable George Townshend, afterwards the first Marquess Townshend, and the writer employed his utmost efforts to hold up to contempt and ridicule the action of this officer when serving as a brigadier-general during Wolfe's Quebec campaign of 1759.

With the character of George Townshend I am not concerned, though it may be said that the sober facts of history do not bear out the truth of the allegations; but the authorship of the Letter is an interesting problem, the more so that much has been written, and with considerable force, to show that the writer of the Letter was also responsible for the famous Junius series. While collecting information on a different subject, chance has thrown in my way some details which have not so far appeared in the various critical works dealing with the Letter or with Junius, and these will perhaps be of interest.

The Letter itself is too long¹ to reproduce, but the extracts given below are sufficient to indicate the nature of the at-

¹ It is printed in full in Colonel (now Major-General, of Kut-el-Amara fame) C. V. Townshend's 'Life of George, First Marquess Townshend' (Murray). See also 'London Magazine,' 1760, and other magazines of the period.

tack, and clearly demonstrate that the writer was in close touch with the events of the Quebec campaign. Thus: "Ardent in the pursuit of glory and the applause of your country, you generously violated the rules of war and risked the resentment of your superior officer.¹ You signed the Articles of Capitulation without his knowledge. . . . He was not insensible of the indignity; but you asked his pardon, and languishing under his wounds he accepted your submission."

Now, a very direct connection between this statement and what actually happened is obtainable from the correspondence that passed between the persons concerned. On the 18th September 1759, that is the day of the surrender of Quebec, General Monckton wrote to Townshend from on shipboard, where he lay wounded: "My dear Townshend,—You are one of the last men in the world that could give me offence, and I do most sincerely assure you that I never said anything *pro* or *con*, except that I did suppose I should see the Capitulation before it was signed, and that to Admiral Saunders and Colonel Carleton, *the latter of whom was of that opinion.*"

A consideration of this letter limits the original source of the information of the anonymous writer to two persons, Saunders

and Carleton. Apart from the fact that Admiral Saunders² signed the Capitulation together with Townshend at eight o'clock on the morning of the 18th September, he was noted for his reticence, and was not in the least likely to raise any objection to a deed to which he had been a party. Thus the onus of making public the conversation referred to in General Monckton's letter certainly appears to fall on Carleton.³ The Capitulation had been proposed by the French commander on the afternoon of the 17th. It is clear from Monckton's letter that he had been apprised of the fact some time in the evening of the same date, and it is also clear that, after the signing on the following morning, Townshend had become aware that camp gossip attributed to him a too hasty completion of the affair and discourtesy to Monckton, and had written to explain his action. We must remember, too, that Carleton, though he had fallen away from grace on at least one occasion,⁴ was nevertheless Wolfe's man, and, as such, bitterly opposed to Townshend, and likely to spread reports antagonistic to him.

In the Letter are also the following sentences: "Though you had formally entered your protest against attacking the

¹ General Monckton is referred to.

² Admiral Saunders was in chief naval command of the fleet at Quebec.

³ Colonel Guy Carleton was Quartermaster-General of Wolfe's army.

⁴ Captain Bell's diary, under date 31st July, refers to "Colonel Carleton's abominable behaviour to General [Wolfe]."

place, you alone enjoyed the honours of its being taken"; and again: "Especially after you had entered your solemn protest against his plans for attacking the enemy"; and again: "Against whose last desperate attempt you protested in form." It is known that Townshend and the other two brigadiers, Monckton and Murray, had protested against certain proposals of the Commander (Wolfe), but such protests were no doubt made at the Council table, and in the presence only of officers on Wolfe's staff; and of these, Carleton, Barré, and the aide-de-camp, Captain Bell, were the most prominent and the most likely, as confidants of Wolfe, to have been present. A correspondence between the Brigadiers, which took place a fortnight after the Capitulation, throws a good deal of light on this phase of the affair. The first letter is from Townshend to Murray, dated 5th October (1759): "General Monckton has a copy of all the letters now become so interesting to us. He told me he would give you a copy of them, and he agreed that I might as well take the originals home with me, as our proofs cannot be too circumstantially authentic. Do you agree? I think I should have a copy of the paper to General Wolfe concerning his intended landing higher up the river. We are then in possession of all the negotiations of the

Campaign as far as we are concerned, and when in possession of such proofs, one may hope to escape the censure of upright and rational men, tho' perhaps no authorities can secure a man from defamation which is the offspring of ignorance and faction."

To this Murray replied on the same date: "I shall look for the letter you mention, take a copy of it, and deposit the original with you. *Since so black a lie was propagated* [my italics], I think myself very happy that you will be on the spot to contradict whatever ignorance or faction may suggest. I have no copy of the paper I sent by you to General Wolfe concerning his scheme of landing between Pointe aux Trembles and St Augustin, but the public orders are sufficient proof of his intention to do it, and likewise of the suddenness of the thought of landing where we did.¹ . . . *I wish his friends had not been so much our enemies.*"

From these two letters it is evident that statements were already being made which, in the opinion of the principal actors, were malicious and untrue. There is abundant evidence that the "black lie" referred to by Murray consisted in an assertion that the Brigadiers had opposed the attack upon the French Army at Quebec. The truth is very much the reverse, but this is

¹ Wolfe's attack on Quebec, in the manner it was finally carried out, contains a good deal that is mysterious.

a subject which cannot be referred to here. The point for consideration is that the charges contained in the Letter are a repetition of the statements propagated by Wolfe's "friends" immediately after the battle of Quebec and the capture of the town. Of these "friends," it is quite certain that Carleton and Barré were the principal and the nearest to his confidence. Apart from many other circumstances, which make the death of Wolfe so lamentable, it is to be regretted that no despatches of his, after the action, could be published. His natural nobleness of character would have given credit where it was due, and the misstatements of his friends would never have seen the light.

Further consideration of the Letter shows the intimate acquaintance of the writer with the details of the battle fought before Quebec on the 13th September (1759). Thus: "Yet, Sir, you are conscious that the Highlanders¹ were not so forward in the pursuit at Quebec as the 47th Regiment,"² — this particular thrust being induced by Townshend's remark in his despatch to Pitt: "The Highlanders, supported by Anstruther's [58th Foot], took to their broadswords and drove part into the Town and part over the River St Charles." As a matter of fact, Townshend

did refer to the good service of the 47th in another part of his despatch; but the author of the Letter was evidently jealous of any credit being given to the Highlanders, though no exception is taken to the forward position assigned to the 58th. Witness the sarcastic: "To what purpose, therefore, this tremendous taking to their broadswords when a whole regiment was between them and the enemy?"

Passing over the fact that this antipathy to the Scots was very "Junian" in character, and even the words employed reappeared later in another Letter attributed to Junius,³ the point we are concerned with is that certainly some one actually present at the battle, and well acquainted with the movements of the units during the struggle, must have inspired, if he did not actually write, the sentences just quoted. We know that Carleton and Barré went to New York, after the fall of Quebec, for the recovery of their health, and of course had ample opportunity of comparing notes, and a consideration of the facts related above makes it extremely probable that one or other was the source from which the writer of the Letter received his information. At this point a curious circumstance requires comment: the delay which occurred in publishing the

¹ The 78th Foot.

² It is remarkable that Carleton became Colonel of the 47th Foot in 1772, though I know of no special connection of his with that regiment in 1759.

³ 'Grand Council on the Affairs of Ireland,' published 22nd October 1767.

Letter. Townshend had returned to England in November of 1759—the Letter did not appear until 23rd September 1760, an interval of more than ten months. Ordinarily an attack of this kind, to carry its full effect, would be launched as soon as possible after the event to which it principally referred. Some very definite cause must have operated to prevent earlier publication. On the assumption that Barré had a hand in the affair an explanation is forthcoming, for we know that his wound at the battle of Quebec had "shattered the bones of his nose and left cheek and rendered his left eye useless," and it is quite unlikely that he would be physically capable of any writing for a long time.

How long Barré's convalescence took we do not know, but when the summer campaign against Montreal was organised by General Amherst in 1760 he accompanied the army in the position of Adjutant-General, and presumably left Albany with Amherst at the latter end of June. Again assuming that Barré had something to do with the Letter, it is quite probable that he would have despatched his contribution to it at about this time, and this would have arrived in England early in August, the summer voyage taking from a month to five weeks. As we shall see, this fits in very well with other circumstances.

I have said above that either Carleton or Barré may have

inspired the Letter, and to these two might be added the aide-de-camp Bell. All three were certainly possessors of the necessary inner knowledge, but of the three it is quite certain that Barré alone was capable of being the *Author*. His career was remarkable. Of French parentage, he had been educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was evidently a scholar of merit. He entered the army and served, without any opportunity for distinction, for eleven years in the 32nd Foot, when he became acquainted with Wolfe, who procured for him an appointment as brigade-major during the Louisburg Campaign of 1758. He accompanied Wolfe to England at the end of the campaign, and at this time undoubtedly became acquainted with Lord Shelburne and his circle—Lord Shelburne being a friend of Wolfe's, with whom he had served in the 20th Foot. With Lord Shelburne Barré formed a close intimacy, which is a fact of considerable importance when considering his authorship of the Letter. During the campaign against Quebec and Montreal, Barré took a distinguished part. He returned to England in 1760, entered Parliament under the ægis of Lord Shelburne, displayed at once his powers as a brilliant and trenchant speaker, and within two years became Adjutant-General of the Army, Governor of Stirling Castle, and a politician of eminence.

Barré regarded Wolfe as the patron who had dragged him

from obscurity and given him his chance; and there is abundant evidence that he faithfully guarded his delicate chief at Quebec, as far as he could, against the troubles that beset him. He fiercely resented, without too critical an appreciation of the military circumstances, the action of the Brigadier-Generals when obliged to oppose the want of continuity of purpose which the Commander displayed. Townshend in particular was the object of his strong aversion.

Lord Shelburne tells us¹—and we may be sure it is true—that Wolfe's famous despatch of September 2, 1759, was worded by Barré, and there is much in the style of it to remind us of the Letter. In short, there is no doubt that his capability, his condition of mind towards the person attacked, and his opportunities for being aware of all the circumstances, seem to single Barré out as the author of at least that part of the Letter which refers to Townshend. Mr N. W. Simons, who examined the question in 1841, and John Britton, who followed in 1848, both definitely attributed the Letter to Barré.

Neither of the two writers just mentioned noticed, however, that Barré could not possibly have been the author

of the Letter as a whole. To prove this it is only necessary to mention two things: first, that when the Letter was published on the 23rd September 1760 Barré was on the voyage to England, bearing General Amherst's despatches after the capture of Montreal, which arrived in England on the 5th of October; and secondly, that there are references in the Letter to events that Barré could not have been aware of, and of these the principal is the battle of Warburg. This action was fought on the 31st July 1760, and the news of it arrived in England on August 8,² which makes it quite certain that Barré, who left Montreal *en route* for England on September 7, could not have written anything on the subject in time for publication on September 23.³

But apart from this, the whole letter gives the impression of composition by more than one hand. Besides the attack on Townshend there is the violent outburst against Lord George Sackville, the latter being dragged in as a kind of tag on the former, the whole reading by no means smoothly. The opinion of Lord George is remarkably Shelburnian⁴ in its tone, and reminds us of the connection between Barré and the Shelburne party.

¹ Life of Lord Shelburne, by Lord Fitzmaurice.

² See Public Advertiser, August 11, 1760.

³ C. Dilke (1852) and F. Griffen (1854) refer to these points, but draw other conclusions.

⁴ See Lord Fitzmaurice's Life of Lord Shelburne, who evidently thought the worst of Lord G. Sackville.

Thus there is certainly much circumstantial evidence which cumulatively seems almost convincing that Barré was part author, and the most probable explanation of what occurred is that he sent his contribution to his correspondent in England, where it arrived shortly before the news of Warburg. "If there could have remained a doubt . . . *here comes* the battle of Warburg," and these words fix the date of the writing of at least the Sackville part of the Letter as within a short time of August 8.

As to the fascinating problem whether Barré was Junius, so much has been written that it is not easy to add anything new. The work, the *Life of Lord Shelburne*, to which reference has already been made, brings out certain facts that have not hitherto been appreciated, and of these I can only refer to one, and this one might, under further research, be the means of proving or disproving the case definitely. I refer to Lord Shelburne's visit to the Continent, accompanied by Barré. On the 11th May 1771 Lord Shelburne put into action a project he had formed for some time of leaving England on an extended Continental tour. Writing to Lord Chatham, under date 25th April, he says, "I have given the necessary orders for my journey, and hope to be gone in a week"; evidently this was not the first intimation of his intention, but we do not know how long previously the idea had taken shape.

From this tour, which included France and Italy, Lord Shelburne did not return until the end of the year. Now we are at once confronted with the fact that, during a period of frequent appearance of the Junius Letters and of correspondence with the printer of the '*Daily Advertiser*,' Barré was, nominally at all events, absent on the Continent! If it can be shown that he was actually absent during the whole period of Lord Shelburne's travels, it is certain that he had nothing to do with Junius. This is, however, where the inquiry breaks down. I have been unable to discover anything to indicate whether Barré remained abroad during the entire period or whether he paid occasional visits to England, as may well have been the case. It is at least certain that he did not return with Lord Shelburne in December of 1771, and there are one or two other considerations which give food for reflection.

On the 19th of April—that is, six days before Lord Shelburne's letter announcing his early departure in company with Colonel Barré—Woodfall, printer of the '*Public Advertiser*,' received a letter from his correspondent "C"—that is, Junius—from which it appears that the writer was contemplating absence from London. He urges the printer to take certain action regarding one of his Letters, which he enclosed (No. 44, published 22nd April 1771), and says, "It will be impossible for me to have an opportunity of altering any

part of it"; and he adds that if for any reason Woodfall should be unwilling to publish it, he was to send it to the 'North Briton.' It seems evident that "C" did not anticipate being in a position to know if Woodfall would accept the Letter for publication or not, and this fits in well enough with the circumstance of Barré's contemplated departure from England with Lord Shelburne.

After this there was a long gap, until June 20, during which no correspondence ensued, except four letters of the Philo-Junius series, which need not necessarily have been written in England; and then followed a number of letters which indicate with some certainty that Junius was again in touch with his printer, and, if Barré had anything to do with it, he must have left Lord Shelburne and returned to London.¹

In December, on the 10th, Junius wrote to Woodfall, bidding him farewell. There was another letter, however, on the 17th. It happens by chance that we know Barré was in Paris shortly after the latter date; for the Abbé Morellet, in a letter to Lord Shelburne dated 8th January 1772, mentions the death of Helvetius (26th December 1771), and refers to the fact

that Barré had been dining with him (Helvetius) just previous to his sudden death. Moreover, in the same letter, Morellet sends his regards to Barré, who had evidently just returned to England. Here, again, is a curious coincidence, for Junius reappeared in London and addressed a letter to the printer dated January 6, in which he referred to the proposed publication of the Letter to Lord Mansfield, which closed the Junius series.

In all this there is certainly no proof that Barré was the author, and the most that can be said is that there are quite a number of coincidental circumstances which tend to indicate that he may have been. The Life of Lord Shelburne, which has been published since the date on which the various critical works on the authorship of Junius appeared, gives much valuable insight into the phases of political thought which influenced Lord Shelburne and his adherents; and, in general, it may be said that the expressions of political leanings contained in the Junius letters are peculiarly those we might expect from any one closely associated with Shelburne; and such a mode of deduction again leads one to indicate Barré as the probable author.

¹ Lord Shelburne's rough notes of his tour, preserved at Lansdowne House, mention that he was in Genoa on June 15. Very possibly Barré did not accompany him on this part of the tour, but there is nothing to prove that this was so.

THE TALE OF A CASUALTY CLEARING STATION.

BY A ROYAL FIELD LEECH.

CHAPTER IX.—BETHUNE.

IN course of time critics came with suggestions. Master was asked if the presence of Army Nursing Sisters as part of our personnel would be useful, or otherwise. With memories of the retreat from Mons and the Granary at the Aisne in his mind, Master blanched.

At length, however, we were persuaded to try the effect of a few women nurses in places where circumstances permitted. The comfort of severely wounded men had to be considered. In large French towns Sisters could undoubtedly help much. A chosen five were sent us.

It worried us not a little at first. Were we destined to give up nomadic life and deteriorate into a regular hospital with fallals? Perish the thought!

Now, also, came Phelps—a rural dean in England—henceforth our padre. Porteous snorted. “A combination of petticoats and Church might suit Florrs—probably would.”

Christmas day was near at hand. After considerable effort we negotiated the purchase of a turkey. Plum-puddings galore for both officers and men arrived from England. The spacious refectory in the Lycée was fairly asking for a Christmas feast. The Sergeant-

Major was consulted and the feast proposed. The Boy, with paper and pencil, and Champion at his elbow, arranged the officers’ banquet. For the moment war ceased to occupy our thoughts.

It was the day before Christmas Eve. All seemed peace and goodwill. There was a beautiful calm, no thought of storm.

Master, summoned to Headquarters, returned about the middle of the day.

“I am off to Bethune at once,” he proclaimed. “I shall be back, I hope, for dinner to-night. We move there to-morrow. You are to get under weigh at once with the packing. We must push off the first lot by 9 A.M., so as to be able to take in patients to-morrow evening. We’ve got three lorries—total carrying 9½ tons—and I am borrowing another three or four.”

“Good heavens!” gasped the Boy. “Can’t we wait until Boxing Day?”

“No,” chuckled Master. “Christmas dinner off! The last unit that was in the ‘École des Jeunes Filles’ at Bethune hurriedly left on account of shells. That is where we are for. I’m told we shall almost certainly be shelled out of it too. You will all be killed.”

“We have accumulated forty

tons of stuff if we have an ounce," groaned Mackenzie.

The Gael, awakened to a burst of vitality by the prospect of fresh fields of initiative, rumbled his hair worse than usual, and expressed his feelings in untranslatable Scotch.

"What about the Nursing Sisters?" questioned Porteous with a chuckle.

"It was at Bethune that Dumas' three musketeers brought Milady to earth in a convent," announced Florrs.

"The place has its points, I believe," agreed Master. "There is, I hear, a famous macaroon shop."

"Splendid!" cried Phelps, hastening away to mobilise his personal kit.

In half an hour Master had given his orders and gone. Then we set to work. When the former returned at 7 o'clock the symmetry of the hospital wards had disappeared for ever.

To repeat the orders, relate the incidents of packing and loading, and describe the general upheaval of things at daylight next morning would be a wearisome task. It is sufficient to relate that by 9 A.M. the first load on several motor-lorries took to the road. An advance party of three-quarters of the personnel threw themselves on top of the loaded lorries, and with shouts of delight turned their faces towards a horizon where lay the Hun lines.

The Nursing Sisters, with disappointed hearts and fear of being permanently left be-

hind, stood and watched. A place had of necessity to be found for them before they could set out.

We attained our object. Some sixty patients were received that same evening from the Field Ambulances in Bethune.

The great red-brick building of the "*École des Jeunes Filles*" stood on the side of the town nearest to the enemy trenches. Consequently, its roof had been smashed by shells, its windows demolished by shock, and its interior perforated by shrapnel bullets. The Germans, however, had seen fit to leave it in peace for a month or more. Hence our venture.

Forming three sides of a square, the building was spacious and pretentious. After inspecting the cubicled dormitories, with their dainty curtains, the luxurious half-dozen shower-baths, the classrooms, kitchen, dining-hall, and tessellated passages, we were considerably impressed with the conditions of life of the *jeunes filles* in times of piping peace. At the time of our occupation, however, several British regiments, fresh from the mud of the trenches, had recently vacated it. The mud of the place and the desperate condition of the etceteras appalled us.

A human remnant of a Field Ambulance discoursing music from a battered piano had to be driven from the wreckage. Help had to be demanded to scrub floors and sweep. Marguerite, the cook, loyal to her

trust as concierge, was cajoled from the seclusion of her lodge and entreated to have the gas put right. The poor girl, her eyes filled with tears, had more than once fled to the cellars when shells demolished the roof above her head, but she smiled a welcome. No doubt human company afforded comfort. She was a useful girl, and if her cooking capabilities were on a par with her other qualities, she must have been "some" cook.

The dining-hall with its many windows afforded excellent accommodation for serious surgical cases. Also there were no stairs. The scholars' beds, collected from all the parts of the building to which they had been carried by luxuriating troops, were seized upon with avidity, and the place arrayed as the show ward. A minor kitchen next door presented itself as a perfect operating theatre. There was a stove, light, and water.

Above, the curtained cubicles were reserved for wounded officers. Several other dormitories, their walls studded with bullets, but with room for fifty stretchers each, remained for men. White enamelled wash-hand basins, with hot and cold water laid on, and cupboards galore, added to the joy of things. Innumerable class-rooms given over to Porteous presented splendid possibilities for segregation of diverse medical cases. Porteous's watering-can with disinfecting lotion was shortly once more *en évidence*. He

had no use for surgeons. Their methods were barbarously crude!

We found quarters for ourselves in the mistresses' rooms upstairs. A mess-room, chosen next door to the kitchen on account of winter weather, appealed to us. The Board Room, handsomely furnished, was coveted for a sitting-room, but Marguerite begged us to desist. It was apparently the Holy of Holies. She dare not give up the keys. And akin to this was another locked door—a physics laboratory,—behind which reposed valuable brass and glass electrical instruments. Of this there is more to relate later. At the moment we succeeded, after much palaver, in prevailing upon her to permit us to use it as a mortuary. Dead men could break no glasses!

Having paced the building from floor to ceiling with care, each room was duly equipped and filled with beds or stretchers. Six hundred was the total. With corridors thrown in, another hundred could be added in an emergency.

The aspect of this picturesque little town was markedly different to that of St Omer. The latter, replete with Staff uniforms and offices, resembled the War Office; while Bethune, its streets crowded with muddy soldiers of every branch of the service, vied with Aldershot on a big field-day. The incessant boom and screech of artillery in the near distance was wonderfully stimulating by contrast with the calm of St Omer.

The shops surrounding the square were unusually good. Despite the fact that the enemy were in a position to exhibit frightfulness by shelling the place at any moment, practically every shop was open. The barber's shop opposite the town clock was packed from morning till night with every class of British uniform. A café not fifty yards away dispensed Manhattan cocktails as delectable as Piccadilly could produce. Familiarity had bred a wonderful contempt of war. Here and there a great shell-hole in the side of a house proclaimed recent events. With a shrug of shoulders it was pointed to as the fortune of war. Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof. British soldiers' pay was flowing into the shops in handfuls. When the bombardment came it would be time enough to flee. One thought of Ypres, and wondered.

And the wounded as they were lifted from the waggons! Rolled in mud and still throbbing with the excitement of battle, they reached us at eventide. The dressing-stations of the Field Ambulances were but a few miles outside the town. Wounded in the afternoon, a man frequently found himself in a real bed by 7 P.M.

The five Nursing Sisters, when eventually quarters were found for them in the town, were in their element. For some peculiarly feminine reason they gloried in being in a position to start at the beginning: wash their patient

of all his accumulated filth, get him between sheets, and provide him with clean garments. Patients cleaned before they reached them appealed to them by comparison not at all. They certainly had no lack of opportunity at that time. Lice are endemic in barns and trenches. The uninitiated shudder at the thought. Shudder as they will, however, the condition must be faced by some one. Disinfection of clothing can be accomplished. It was, however, no easy task to cleanse helplessly wounded men when they arrived in hundreds, which must make room the following day for an equal number.

Our Christmas dinner was not lost after all. The turkey and plum-puddings came with us, and other gifts arrived opportunely. Amongst the latter was Princess Mary's Christmas Box. Master had captured the boxes allotted to our unit at the last moment before leaving St Omer. They were highly valued by the men, and were duly handed to each by Master himself.

The view of the enemy's star-shells at night and the course of artillery fire by day was decidedly interesting to the orderlies, but they were given little time for recreation. The building, invaded by a multitude of begrimed sick and wounded, would no sooner be cleaned than another lot obscured the horizon. Even after their clothes were dried the slighter cases required half a day to scrape their coats of clay. After a shower-

bath, a clean shirt, and a shave, a man began to recover his bodily self-respect. The patience of the badly wounded never failed them. Thomas Atkins, uncouth, what-you-will, presents an embodiment of Britain's strength which no Hun can ever equal. He is extraordinarily cheerful when his strength suffices. When it doesn't he remains quite still. There was one who, with bandaged eyes, awoke and talked. He had lost all count of time, and his eyes were no use to him at all. It was ten o'clock in the morning. "Good night, sir," he said cheerily.

The German prisoners' attitude here and there explained much. One, shouting and struggling, was carried to the operating theatre willy-nilly. The operation was necessary, and it was performed without trouble. The cause of the uproar in due course came to light. The wretched man, stuffed with lies of British cruelty, imagined that he was to be operated upon without an anæsthetic.

Each morning an ambulance train arrived from the Base, and the daily clearance of those cases fit to travel followed. The men, with clean faces and clean shirts, each wearing the usual ticket denoting the nature of his injury, who smiled as they were carried forth on stretchers to the motor ambulances, were certainly not recognisable as the same who had entered the evening before as begrimed derelicts. Those Nursing Sisters did splendid

work. They were not given to talk, and they never rested except when driven. Even Porteous grunted approval.

Phelps had been elected to share Master's bedroom. Florrs and Porteous lived in the next-door room. The others found a small dormitory, which they shared in common. Porteous and the padre sat side by side at meals, with Florrs opposite. The two latter habitually discussed churches. Porteous, unearthing old rancour born of St Quentin, expressed opinion that Florrs knew more of fluff than holy water. In time the padre grew to make allowances. In fact, he found it necessary to watch his P's and Q's. Rumours of all sorts reached us daily. Phelps, peculiarly absorbent, fell a ready victim. Porteous, accurate in detail, would suddenly stop eating, turn about, face the quaking Phelps with uplifted finger, and demand a statement as to whether the latter had himself seen the incident reported. That there was reason for Porteous's sternness was soon admitted. The "facts" reported on "most reliable authority" are a marked feature of war!

There was, for instance, the tale of the French village curé. An army priest entered a little church to pray. The church was empty. On coming out, he was accused of having signalled to the enemy, and was arrested. His accusers swore that the bell in the spire rang while he was there, and that the same thing constantly happened. On explaining his innocent visit he was released;

but the village curé was subsequently arrested by the Assist. Provost-Marshal, tried, and shot. The evidence was reported to be painfully conclusive.

The A.P.M. in question, on being interrogated, laughed the story to scorn; and the old curé would, no doubt, have laughed louder still had he heard it. A wonderful fabrication.

Phelps, who never spared himself in visits to the firing line, heard many tales during his expeditions. He fattened on Porteous's criticisms.

A zealous and manly padre can do much. Morale in trenches is no more a negligible quantity than ammunition. A chaplain of the right sort on the eve of battle is worth his weight in gold. He must, however, be a man as well as a priest.

It was on a memorable Sunday afternoon that some of us went afield to watch the German shells falling into the village of Givenchy, and our own guns replying with marked effect. We returned in peace to our habitation, received our convoy of wounded, went our rounds, and dined as usual. It had been a more or less uneventful day. Comparative calm prevailed. The fact that German shells might at any moment disturb our serenity had been almost forgotten. A fool's paradise, however, has its limitations.

Next morning the crash came.

For those who had not been on night duty it was just about

getting-up time, when Master, his nerves on edge, sat up suddenly in bed and looked across at Phelps.

"What was that noise, padre?" he asked—well knowing the answer.

A shriek like a mammoth rocket, ending in a crashing explosion, apparently just outside the window, shook the building to its cellars.

"I wonder what poor fellow that has killed?" replied Phelps, springing to his feet, and endeavouring to think consecutively.

Master did not wait to question further. Another shriek of metal echoed through the compound as he sprang from the bed and rushed for clothes. Two hundred and seventeen patients were in the building—many of them serious operation cases. What of them?

"D——n those German blighters!" he groaned, as he struggled into boots. "Why couldn't they have waited until we were dressed?—the swine!"

Florrs, in pyjamas, followed by the Boy, running across the corridor, met Master at the bedroom door.

"The night-duty corporal is outside," cried the former. "He reports: 'Please, sir, "B" ward is gone.'"

Now be it understood that "B" ward was the serious case ward, the walls of which were nearly all glass. A rush to the spot showed that the N.C.O.'s statement was justified. A shell, bursting against the foundations, had shattered every square inch of glass in the place. The night-duty

party had, however, acted with commendable promptitude. By the mercy of Providence not a patient had been injured. Every one was carried out up to the great entrance-hall in safety. We breathed heartfelt sighs of relief.

The shelling apparently having ceased, the N.C.O. on duty in the officers' ward calmly continued to dish up breakfast. Master, however, intervened, ordering all patients to be collected in the hall. Breakfast could wait.

News unexpectedly arrived that an ambulance train was in the station. Its presence was providential. The Motor Ambulance Convoy was sent for. Patients who could walk collected their things and did not loiter. In fact, those who could walk were many more than had been imagined!

Then came another shell—swish! bang!—into the far side of the compound. It killed two men of the Motor Convoy and seriously inconvenienced six motor-cycles stacked against a wall.

Phelps, his duties ever before his eyes, ran along the corridor to the mortuary where there was a man awaiting burial. His servant, who assisted him at funerals, followed automatically. Presently there was another crash. Master and the Boy sprang back from a window as the glass fell in. A column of dust and plaster, as from a great fire, obscured the corridor. A few moments later, Charles, Phelps' servant, half carrying the padre in his arms, emerged from the chaos.

"Mr Phelps, sir, was blown up in the air, sir," he reported. "Went up to the roof and down again."

The tale in substance was true enough. Fortunately the padre, although dazed, was only slightly out on the head, and half an hour later was smoking a cigarette. The beautiful physics laboratory, however, with its wealth of crystal and instruments, was a thing of the past. Poor Marguerite!

There was no time lost in loading up the ambulance waggons. A shell might drop into the middle of them at any time. The Huns had neglected to issue a detailed programme of the times of arrival of the shells. This might be but the prelude to a bombardment such as Ypres had suffered.

The time spent in evacuating the 217 cases was 35 minutes, and the help that the patients themselves offered was a marked feature of the performance.

Marguerite, crying quietly, was besought to avail herself of a trip abroad. Two young schoolmistress lodgers were also invited. The latter accepted, but Marguerite, like the Roman sentinel, had received orders which she interpreted in her own way. She retreated to the cellar.

The patients gone, there was no further object in delay. The Nursing Sisters had not yet arrived that morning. A peremptory message to their quarters in the quieter part of the town, accompanied by a

motor ambulance, caused them to join the ambulance train also.

Leaving a guard over the equipment, the personnel were now ordered to embark in the motor-lorries. Meanwhile, a wire had been despatched for orders regarding a safer location, and we were given time to think.

Beyond one orderly, whose head had been cut, and the padre, we had suffered no casualties whatever. We had been grievously hustled, and most of us had neglected

breakfast. Otherwise, all was well. It was very annoying, all the same. It was obvious that our beautiful building was unfit for helplessly wounded at present. Therefore there was nothing left for us but to seek another farther back.

The order to locate ourselves in a certain little town a few miles in rear was received at last. The day was still young. The unit was not yet derelict—

"Greatly disfigured, but still in the ring," as somebody aptly quoted.

CHAPTER X.—IN RETREAT.

The descent from a building accommodating many hundreds of wounded to the meagre shelter afforded by a couple of village schoolhouses was not easy to bear with equanimity. That, however, within a couple of hours, became our humiliating lot.

Every French village of any pretensions possesses a boys' schoolhouse. In towns within the war zone, where children are *défendu*, they are useful. These we seized upon as a matter of course. The total number of stretchers which could be utilised within the two combined amounted to a little more than one hundred. They were separated by half a mile.

In the courtyard the cooks erected tarpaulin-covered kitchens, incinerators, and various etceteras of sanitary appliances. Medical and surgical equipment had to be borrowed from the nearest British Medical

unit some miles down the line. We did not require much for the accommodation available. Our wings had been clipped with a suddenness and completeness which was almost paralysing. We surveyed our preparedness and groaned at its puerility.

Master searched the environs of the village in vain for other hospital buildings. Nevertheless a small empty chateau, quite unsuitable for hospital work, was incidentally discovered. This we seized upon for our accommodation. There were no mess utensils, but getting in touch with a supply train Mackenzie captured rations *ad lib*.

At noon news reached us that the shelling at Bethune had quite ceased and that all was safe. At what time it might begin again one could not calculate. To attempt to house wounded men in the "École des Jeunes Filles"

under the circumstances would have been insane. That our equipment must be recovered was nevertheless most important. Florrs and the Boy, with the lorries and a party of men, elected to return and clear out our stuff from the wreck of broken glass and plaster. Champion, absolutely lost without his mess gear, did not wait to be asked to join the departing detachment; he fell in as a matter of course.

Meanwhile patients sent on from Bethune were reaching our new location. Master and Porteous, anxiously calculating possibilities, accepted those that came, and prayed that the day's count might be miraculously small. An ambulance train was expected. Therein lay comfort.

At Bethune all was peace. Marguerite, once more having ventured forth from the cellar, greeted the party with delight. But the men had little time for recreation. The prestige of the unit was at stake. A new hospital had to be equipped somewhere, and every stick of the thirty-five to forty tons of stuff had to be loaded up in due course. "B" ward was a sad sight, the operating theatre not much better. Most of the rest of the building was quite habitable.

With coats off, the men spread themselves like ants over the place, each N.C.O. and man wildly keen to retrieve special articles which he individually considered essential to the wellbeing of his own particular job in a new location.

The possibility of enemy shells was entirely forgotten. Suddenly a battery of our artillery clattered up the street outside, halted, and quickly changed direction.

Whiz—bang!

A shell fell full into the middle of the compound, exploded, and scattered.

Where was the spy? Who had signalled?

In rapid succession a second followed. Our junior corporal, throwing up his hands, fell dead. Others, rising from beneath articles of furniture, discovered, to their surprise, that they were concussed but otherwise unhurt. That the place had again become unhealthy, however, was a fact beyond dispute.

Blowing the whistle, Florrs, for the second time that day, gathered together his men and evacuated an untenable position. To risk further lives for the sake of equipment, which could be collected at any time, would have been a fool's policy.

It was a sad little party which returned at 3 o'clock to the new headquarters. The body of our dead corporal—the first of the unit to fall in action after many months of good comradeship together—was carried with them. Nevertheless, the journey had not been entirely unfruitful. There were three lorry-loads of equipment. That was something.

Darkness fell early. It was a calm frosty night. The episodes of the day, reconsidered in detail beneath the coldly twinkling stars, seemed hardly real. It was true that amidst

the many greater things of even one day's war the whole affair was but a storm in a teacup. And yet pulses could hardly fail to beat the quicker for the experience. The finger of death had been familiar enough to us, but it had hitherto refrained from directly touching one of us. The environment of village life was distinctly soothing to our harassed minds. Those of us who could be spared at last started forth to find our way to the little chateau, where our servants had captured beds and a dining-room.

The usual long, straight, poplar-lined avenue led to the front door. In the shadows, as we passed, there stood a man and girl as indifferent to war's alarms as if in an English village lane. The British infantryman and French maiden locked in a tender embrace were quite oblivious to our approach. The girl, her head nestling upon the man's shoulder, was troubled by nothing. They spoke no word—probably could not—but the language of love needed no dictionary. This little scene, in itself so trivial, preached a veritable sermon of peace, which acted like a tonic.

Champion had managed to raise a roaring fire in the main sitting-room of the house. With his ingratiating smile, he had also blarneyed the caretaker into providing cutlery and glass. There was bully beef in stew, excellent bread and butter, wine, and ration rum. It was good to be "at home" again. The sensations, however, felt somewhat like what must have been those of

a suddenly exiled monarch. Our kingdom lay beyond our grasp in Bethune.

Champion, in his shirt sleeves, announced that the meal was ready.

"Where is your coat, Champion?" asked Master with assumed severity. "And what do you mean by coming away without the mess gear and food? Where is our proper table?"

"Please, sir, my coat is in the kitchen at Bethune. I wasn't allowed to go back for it," groaned Champion. "I wouldn't care if it wasn't for my watch, but it's in the pocket of my coat, which is hanging on a nail in the kitchen of the hospital."

"Humph!" grunted Master. "Where's the table?"

"Please, sir, me and Blobbs was both blown flat on the floor under the table which we was carrying," chuckled Champion. "It was the shell, sir, what killed the corporal; so we thought, sir, it was time we came away. I shall miss that watch, sir."

"You can have another try for it," sighed Master.

"Should like to, sir, very much. My missus gave it to me, sir, and I wouldn't lose it for a lot. The coat ain't nothing."

Despite drawbacks, the meal was good, and so was the rum. By comparison with those who were sitting in the trenches, we began to feel that we were indeed fortunate.

The necessity for finding more room for wounded was obvious. Next day Master

sought out the Camp Commandant. In conjunction with the local Maire this official, inside a war zone, possesses many powers.

In England, as yet, the conditions of war as compared with France are felt hardly at all. No matter how pretentious the chateau, or how obstructive the owners, *la guerre* acknowledges no law except its own. Knowing these things, Master and the Commandant forgathered and set forth with determination. A large chateau located in noble grounds outside the town, which had hitherto been reputed to be quite unsuitable for a hospital, was their objective.

A circular drive led up to the house. A pond exploited by swans lay in front. A couple of peacocks posed on the stone balustrade of the verandah. A salon on one side of the entrance opened into a conservatory. An old-world garden presenting remnants of a time-worn ecclesiastical coat-of-arms on its walls, an antique fountain and artesian well, and acres of park, walled off from the outside world with the exclusiveness of the ancient *régime*, told its own tale.

The old woman in charge, with her daughters, gardeners, and one or two henchmen, was up in arms at once. She was only a concierge, but her words to the uninitiated would have spelt finality. The volubility of *la femme française* is proverbial. It was quite impossible that we should occupy the place for the purposes

suggested. Where were she and her *entourage* to sleep, to eat? A hospital! *Mais non!*

"Is it any use to you?" asked the Commandant blandly, turning to Master. "One wing of the house has been quite emptied of furniture."

"H'm!" grunted the latter, pacing the bare rooms. "Twelve beds in the drawing-room; twelve in the dining-room; a pack-store in the conservatory."

"Well?" repeated the Commandant, ignoring the feminine garrulousness at his elbow.

"Six on the landing," mumbled Master, mounting the stairs. "Six along the passage. Ah! An excellent bath-room! Hot and cold water. Good!" Pausing at the door of the best bedroom, he smiled. "Not at all a bad operating theatre—good light—fireplace—electric light laid on. Four other bedrooms—two for Nursing Sisters, two for some of us. Excellent! Let us see the top storey."

Without a word they mounted the last flight of stairs, the concierge, muttering, in their wake.

"Ah!" cried Master, "the usual French garrets. Two first-rate big rooms with alcoves. Twenty to twenty-five patients in each. Not such a large house as it looks, but will make excellent accommodation for serious operation cases; and every little helps."

"There is a first-rate kitchen, and the stables would store all your quartermaster's stuff," volunteered the Commandant.

"Good!" exclaimed Master.

"We must have it. There are also enough small bedrooms for some officers, and I see a little room next the kitchen which will suit us splendidly for a mess."

"But," expostulated the concierge, "where are we to go?"

"You and your daughters will live in two bedrooms and one of the salons. You will share the latter with the Nursing Sisters for meals. Your friends have no business here at all. Refugees are not allowed. *Fini!*"

And *fini* it was. The law of *la guerre* admits of little appeal from the local inhabitant. The soldier is a necessity in the area; civilians are not. The roar of guns in the near distance accentuated the need of our occupation, and as Master's eye roamed across the park and calculated the value of the level meadows as standing for hospital tents in warmer weather, the value of the place was more apparent than ever.

We lost no time in getting a foothold. Mackenzie, having once more explored Bethune conditions, started forth to continue the rescue of equipment. The chateau was made the headquarters. The boys' school, under the Gael, became No. 1 Section; Porteous, in command of the girls' school, answered for No. 3 Section. The Red Cross flag and Union Jack floated triumphantly over each. We were now equipped for 300. It was but a modest effort after Bethune, but we had no intention of checking expansion at the first oppor-

tunity. The country would require careful scouting.

No further Hun aggressiveness emanated from Bethune. Within a short time the chateau verandah, compound, and stables were overflowing with cases and bales.

Champion, having recovered his effects intact, began a systematic investigation of neighbouring farms in search of ducks, fowls, eggs, and milk. The cooks spread themselves with their stoves from the kitchen on to the gravel outside. The woman-cook of the concierge hobnobbed gaily with them. How the men talked French has never been revealed. That they knew but a few words was certain. Nevertheless, that the *entente* grew daily with steady strength was a fact beyond dispute. The number of our personnel allotted to the chateau chose a savoury spot behind the hen-house for their dining-room, and slept in the coach-house. They were also quite content. Novel surroundings appealed to them. The stereotyped routine of barrack life in England is sadly deficient in such novelties!

The Nursing Sisters, eating their hearts out in retreat back at St Omer, were telegraphed for. Their rooms were ready, a salon provided, and serious cases awaiting them. They came next day.

Meanwhile, Phelps had been more than busy in his own line. The absence of a Regulation God's Acre was causing him trouble. The local Roman Catholic churchyard was not

quite what he wanted, or what the curé wished to give him. A hospital in war-time unfortunately cannot long carry on without its cemetery. Phelps was informed that, according to law, any recognised cemetery might be re-utilised after fifteen years. The padre's British ideas demanded rest in perpetuity. At last, after much palaver, a section of a ploughed field was handed over by the Maire. Our deceased corporal was consigned to the near corner—the place of honour.

Then Phelps collected officers' servants and odds and ends of men who had little work to do. They were willing workers. Wooden stakes and wire were forthcoming, and a fence grew apace. Then a deed was drawn up which it was stated would defeat outsiders who might wish to reclaim the ground. Crocus bulbs, &c., were next collected from somewhere, and a stock of plain wooden crosses demanded from a local carpenter.

Eventually a stone cross supplemented the wooden one which marked our corporal's resting-place. That he would not lie alone for long was unfortunately a foregone conclusion.

Long parallel rows of symmetrical crosses now mark the spot, and several stone ones stand forth as sentinels. Outside the rail is now a smaller collection of German graves. Padre Phelps had his good reasons for separating the sheep from the goats. Perhaps he did not think that

the ravagers of Belgium would be welcome in God's Acre. He did not say so.

Each evening the long convoys of motor ambulances once more drove up to our doors. The serious cases having been unloaded into the chateau, the sitting surgical cases went on to the Gael's section, and the medical to Porteous.

The frescoed salons of the chateau presented a strange aspect. Folding doors could easily be removed, so as to make a large ward. On a sunny morning the conservatory with its greenery was very pleasant for patients to look upon. A wounded man, muddy and foul from the trenches, would open his eyes and blink in wonder at his surroundings as he found himself staring at a frescoed ceiling or listening to the frou-frou of the leaves in the conservatory.

Master failed entirely to find further houses. Marquees seemed the only things left. As yet, however, it was too cold for their use. The military aspect of the question had also to be considered. Tents attract aeroplanes. The latter are tell-tales for artillery; they also do not hesitate to drop bombs themselves. But the days were lengthening, and spring might determine what winter failed to accomplish.

There was an enormous open-sided straw-shed beyond the stables. It was too cold a place for winter, but, as regards space, could readily shelter 250. We looked upon it with longing eyes, calculating what we

could make of it when its winter's load of straw should be exhausted. The thought that a big spring battle might find us unprepared was too galling for words. Had we been able to see into futurity, we would not have worried!

The bleak days which followed were long and tedious. Monotonous routine of trench warfare took the place of the unexpected. Each evening the Gael and Porteous returned to dinner at the chateau with a regularity which bored them intensely. The place began to work like clockwork. Officers and men had no use for clocks. The essence of warfare is exciting change. The "dead levels

of continuance" were beginning to make themselves felt. We recalled memories of the Aisne, even the scramble back from Mons, and sighed with genuine regret.

But the spring came at last. And with it came a secret warning to prepare — to evacuate every patient then in the buildings to the Base, clear the decks for action, and sum up resources.

The news acted like a powerful stimulant. Jaded nerves, and orderlies who had grown stale, revived instantaneously. A new era of we knew not what loomed up before our mental horizon like a mirage above a desert of shifting shadows.

(To be continued.)

"FALLEN ANGELS."

VIII. THE LAST LAP.

IN the big hall of the billets of No. 2 Cadet Company a number of Angels were collected. Some were discussing in bated breath the proceedings going on behind the doors of the skippers' office; others, in attitudes of simulated negligence, were standing around the notice-board on which Lewis had announced that he would post the results of the final examination some time during the evening. A few were seated in groups in the hall discussing for the hundredth time the answers they had written on the previous day. Others again, with a fine pretence of nonchalance, stood about smoking, and chatting on every subject in the world except the one nearest to their hearts—viz., the examination results.

"Why don't you come down to tennis?" shouted Cadet Ball from the top of the stairs to Greenway, whose tall figure he observed among the nearest group.

"Courts sure to be putrid to-day," replied Greenway, lighting another cigarette.

"Rot; it's been consistently fine for the last two days. I believe you're hanging about waiting for the bally exam. results. What on earth's the good of that? If you've failed you've failed, and no hanging about here will help it. Come on down and make a four."

But Greenway was adamant, and reiterating that the courts were rotten, and that *he* wasn't waiting for any bally results, but merely felt lazy and wanted a quiet evening, picked up a paper and sat down, turning over the pages absent-mindedly, one eye on the door whence the lists would come.

Ball and a few others finally departed jeering at the patient watchers, for the lists were not expected to be out before six or half-past in the evening at the earliest, and it was now only just a quarter-past four.

Inside the office, Lewis, Phayle, and Gamaliel were at work at the most noxious form of employment it is possible to conceive—namely, correcting exam. papers. Fallen Angels' papers are not of the most lucid at any time, and the excitement of the final exam. appeared to have upset quite a lot of preconceived ideas as to spelling and style.

"How many marks would you give, Master, to a fellow who answers a question in nineteen lines of close writing without a single punctuation mark and only two verbs?"

Thus Phayle to Lewis's address—

"A wash out, I should fancy, or perhaps half marks, if he appears to show the dawnings of the most elementary common-sense. What price this

answer to your question as to when distances are underestimated?

'Distances are underestimated—

(1) on wet days; (2) on dry days.'

He'd have saved ink if he'd said 'All days.'

"Let's have some tea anyway. My head is beginning to reel from this game, for we've been at it now continuously since this morning, and some of these ooves deserve to fail on their handwriting alone."

Gamaliel rang and ordered tea, while Phayle remarked, as the mess-waiter disappeared—

"Do you remember the fellow the S.M. ran in because he refused to peel potatoes, and when he was brought up before you he said, 'I joined the army to fight, and not to peel potatoes.' Well, I feel like throwing my hat at some one and saying that I joined the army to fight and not to be a beastly school-master. I'm going sick next week."

"Not much, you aren't, my son," replied Lewis. "I'm going sick next week—*seniores priores*. A week on the river is my ticket, I think, and your malady can wait till next month."

The entry of tea out short the discussion as to the respective urgency of their particular maladies, and the talk turned on to the peculiarly national character of the competitive exam., which Gamaliel described as a real unmistakable "British Institution."

If you wish to test a man's capabilities for any job there

are several ways of doing it: you may watch him at his work; you may question him verbally; if the work is one whose success will greatly depend on the man's coolness in moments of stress, you may endeavour to estimate his character and mentality in order that you may have some clue as to how that man will conduct himself in a tight corner; you may even go and ask some of your acquaintances who have seen him at work their opinion of the man.

But to the English mind all these methods savour of unfairness, and have certain inherent disadvantages. Firstly, you see the man himself, and may thereby be prejudiced in favour of A, who obviously washes every day, to the consequent detriment of the chances of B, who equally obviously has not washed his neck for at least a week. Again, your presence may upset C's nervous system and make him do things in a stupid way, or give futile answers to questions that he would answer perfectly satisfactorily at any other time; and thus D, admittedly less brilliant but possessing a cool head, comes out top. The supporters of this argument naturally omit to mention the fact (of which most likely they are ignorant) that this method is exceedingly sound in reality, for in every walk of life a cool head and a temperament not easily disturbed are more valuable than mere brilliancy of intellect; and this is specially the case in selecting leaders for war, whether they be corps or section commanders.

Still further, the fact of one man's name being Jones may reveal to you the fact of his being related to your friend "Old Jones," and consequently you will prefer him to Smith, whose name wakes no responsive echo in the chambers of your memory.

So the English people will have none of these methods in connection with the public services, which, like Cæsar's wife, must be above suspicion, but demand a purely impartial test in the shape of the written examination, wherein the arbiters will merely correct papers written in a quiet room far from any disturbing influences, distinguished by meaningless index numbers which cannot possibly influence any one's heart unless indeed some superstitious examiner errs on the side of leniency in favour of poor number 13, and where the gruff, unkempt, and unwashed shall have equal chance with the cleanly of person and courteous of tongue.

Note you, if we desire to engage a gardener or a cook or an employee in our business, we never dream for a moment of adopting this method, but invariably revert to the good old-fashioned methods of interviews, questions as to antecedents, family connections, &c. It is only in the public services that we followed the examination scheme; for since to the pre-war English mind the art of leading troops was as simple as falling off a fence, and the fact of being a skilful shedder of ink a guar-

antee that you must be a born leader of troops or the heaven-sent administrator of a colony in darkest Africa, what more suitable method of choice existed than the competitive exam.? It was on a par with our method of those pre-historic times when, while insisting that our gardener should be a *gardener* and not a typist, and that our chauffeur should be a *chauffeur* and not a groom, and that our foreman of engineering works should be an engineer and not a shop-walker, we insisted that whatever else the head of our land forces might be, one thing he must on no account be—viz., a soldier.

In conformity with this policy the Fallen Angels were after a while compelled to introduce examinations to test the final fitness of the fledgling Angels for the leadership of a platoon. The cherubim to whom fell the task of establishing the exams. are by birth and training staunch Conservatives, but in many ways they are in reality the rankest of thoroughgoing Radicals; and the result was that their examination system would have brought tears to the eyes of many of the old supporters of the examination method of selection, for, being war-time, they were enabled to introduce not a few changes.

Briefly stated, their theory was this (the argument may be a little difficult to follow, for the mind of the "hired assassin" does not always work on the same lines as that of the respectable citizen,

but I have endeavoured to put it into coherent English)—

"We are at war with an exceedingly powerful enemy who is determined to leave no stone unturned to crush us, and whose great speciality is soldiering. We require a large number of officers for these new armies that, thanks to the Navy, the Old little army, and our marvellous luck, we have had time to raise. The obvious qualities that an officer must possess are the following:—

- (1) the gift of leadership, which includes,
- (2) a personality and a character that will command the respect of the men committed to his care,
- (3) a smart personal appearance combined with cleanly and temperate habits, for no men can be expected to respect a leader who never washes or is to be seen tight, or wandering about in public places arm in arm with ladies of slight reputation.

"On a foundation of the above we will," said the cherubim, "build up as sound a fabric of military knowledge as the short time at our disposal will allow. We realise that it will not be a vastly imposing structure, because three to four years is the least that will serve in most cases to produce subalterns of the type that pulled the British army through the retreat from Mons, but we will produce as good a type as the time will allow.

"Further, if we find it necessary, we will, as far as possible, teach him to speak the King's English, placing his H's correctly and not maltreating his vowels. Also, if required, we will explain to him the use of the fork and finger-bowl and napkin, pointing out the foolishness of eating peas with a knife. Thus will our fledglings acquire a polish which will stand them in good stead when, on joining their regiments, the mess waiters report on them to the companies, saying: 'Young Mr Browne, 'im wot's just joined, 'e's quite a proper officer, 'e is; not like Mr Jones, 'im wot picks 'is teef wiv a fork, same like you and me, Bill.'

"On such points, strange as it may seem in these enlightened days, Thomas Atkins lays great stress, for he does like his officer to behave like a gentleman. 'Relic of a benighted feudal past,' we seem to hear some one say. Possibly, but we are not discussing the origin of the quaint idea, merely stating an incontrovertible fact, and trying to ensure that our fledglings shall not suffer from it."

On this syllabus therefore did the cherubim prepare their exams. They combined the various methods of selection; adopting the old-fashioned one of studying their pupils' characters during the course of training, so as to find out as far as is possible, under peace conditions, the quality of work that they might be expected to produce under the disturbing conditions that prevail in war;

seeking out the frequently latent gift of leadership and developing it to the utmost; and from time to time regretfully discarding such Angels as it was clear possessed it not at all, or whom it was evident had not sufficient stability of character to warrant their being entrusted with the command of men. They made the whole period of the course one long continuous examination of character; pruning, forcing, and at times weeding until sure that the foundations on which they were erecting their little edifice of military knowledge were well and truly laid.

Thereafter they proceeded to test the fabric of knowledge laboriously built up by test after test, some written, but the greater part under more or less the conditions in which this knowledge, if to be of any practical use, would have to be applied—that is to say, by harassing tests in the field, by cross-fires of verbal questions at unexpected moments, by the placing of responsibility on young or untried shoulders, so that they might gradually harden to the strain; and where it appeared that certain ones were slow of learning or unaccustomed to accept responsibility, they would be set back for a space until they should catch up in learning or acquire the habit of bearing responsibility.

All the while the cherubim and seraphim took notes of each man's abilities, and on these notes they allotted a certain percentage of marks for the examination under

the title of "Field marks." At the end of the course they held the final exam., and a more drastic change in the examination system it would be hard to imagine, because they said: "Since we are training men to be soldiers, and leaders and instructors of soldiers, we will examine them on purely military matters. We will not test their knowledge of Latin and Greek, algebra or history,—instead we will question them concerning the handling of sections and platoons, the use of patrols, the powers and limitations of the weapons with which they are armed, the construction of trenches and the handling of bombs, rather than the quality of Horace's verse as opposed to that of Virgil. Finally, we will ask ourselves this question: "Can we safely entrust the lives of fifty men to this man's keeping? and if we cannot conscientiously answer in the affirmative, then whether he be duke's son, J.P.'s nephew, or cook's brother, we will return him to the ranks as unfit to receive a commission."

Which they did, to the great dejection and sorrow of certain Angels, who on account of being B.A.'s, or M.P.'s cousins, or recommended by Lord So-and-So, imagined that therefore they were in all respects suitable to be officers. Thereafter certain people outside rose up and wrote long screeds to the head of the Angels as to the why and wherefore. All they got for their pains, however, was a blunt answer

to the effect that he had regretfully come to the conclusion that their protégés were not fitted to be entrusted with the lives and wellbeing of a platoon, and that it was better that they should be told so now at once by him than hear it from the lips of the hapless survivors (if there remained any) of the men who might be committed to their care(?). Which took the wind out of their sails at once, for even the most virulent detractor of the cherubim can hardly make capital out of the fact that his nephew has been refused a commission on the grounds that it would be murder to commit the lives of men into his keeping.

When the exam. was first started by the War Office it came as a great shock to the Angels who, prior to the arrival of the cherubim and the white hat-bands, had managed to get along without any such things. Thus when Lewis assembled his No. 1 platoon and announced that a final examination would be held on a certain date, the hearts of Gabbler, Meyerstein, and Co., were greatly downcast, for they were having a "cushy" time in the expectation of being gazetted shortly without any more ado. After a few months, however, the Angels got accustomed to it, realising that the ordeal was not so very terrible after all, and provided that a man kept wide awake at lecture time, read up the passages of the training manuals indicated by the instructors, and generally

displayed a spirit of keenness and a thirst for knowledge, coupled with a modicum of common-sense, his chances of failure were fairly remote. Still, now and then there were catastrophes—but they were rare, because those who were not brilliantly intellectual generally managed to do well enough in the practical to score at least passing marks on the whole test; and as for those who could do well neither in the practical nor in the written tests, the army was well rid of them in any capacity higher than that of private soldier. As Lewis said, "Although the written exam. will not show us in the least who is the best all-round man for a commission, it will certainly eliminate the useless, since a man who cannot do moderately well in the quiet of an examination hall will certainly not do any better in the racket of an action."

On this particular occasion there was not much fear of any one failing, because the cadets sitting for the exam. were quite an exceptionally keen lot, the weeding and pruning process having been more than usually thorough. Still Lewis had one or two weaklings who, while passable in the field, were generally rather failures in the paper line; and he feared greatly that he might find himself compelled to keep them back for another month if the questions were over-searching, and he did not care very much to have people left over when the new drafts came up.

"How are we getting on?" he queried as he ticked off the last of a large file of papers.

"Nearly finished my lot," said Gamaliel, refilling his pipe. "I've only got to total up the marks for each question and then I can let you have the results of this paper."

"Mine will be ready in about ten minutes," replied Phayle; "but I do wish No. 27 would learn to write a hand looking a little less like a child's copy-book of pot-hooks and hangers. Who is No. 27, Master? By the verbosity displayed I should imagine it to be Grant, or possibly Allen."

Lewis pulled out a list of index numbers and consulted it. "Allen it is. Is it more than ever purple patches? I should think that lad wrote for the cheaper type of magazine in civil life. His answers are always chatty, and never by any chance conspicuous for accuracy. His answer to the question about the general principles of trench assaults read like a page from our local rag, and he talked glibly about 'Centres of resistance' and 'Points d'appui'; but I very much doubt if he could define the meaning of either term. He is a brilliant example of the dangers of a superficial education. Still he's got a certain way of taking hold of men which will render him quite a useful platoon commander. Also, until he's found out, his regiment will probably put him down as an extremely knowledgable fellow."

He glanced through the list of index numbers again, and set to work entering the marks against them. Presently Gamaliel passed his list over, and after a while Phayle did the same.

"Good," said Lewis; "now we can go ahead and total up the lot and see how we stand."

Having entered up all the marks, they proceeded to add up the various columns, including the marks allotted for the practical part of the work.

"Not so bad," said Phayle as he scanned the list. "Every one through; Ball and Greenway, as one would expect, have only a mark or two to spare. Still, enough is as good as a feast, and those two lads won't mind much what place they get so long as they get through all right. The results are distinctly higher than our last batch, and we've got no failures, so we shall have a cheery dinner to-night. I hate final dinners when there are people who have failed still here, for it's a most depressing sort of entertainment trying to make valedictory speeches under those conditions when you know that some of the people present think you have failed them on purpose."

"Well, we may as well send out the lists to be posted up, and then get home to change for dinner, for it's getting latish." With this Lewis wrote a few words in red ink on the list, signed it, and despatched the clerk to pin it up on the notice-board.

As the office door opened, the murmur of talk in the hall ceased abruptly, and the little crowd gathered round the notice-board, towards which the clerk was making his way. "Now for it," said Cadet Ball, as he elbowed his way through the throng and looked for his name in the place he expected to find it if it appeared at all—viz., at the bottom of the sheet. Suddenly he gave a wild cheer as he read the few words Lewis had penned on the paper. "No failures. Hooray!! No more bally nights in trenches, and no more ruddy four-hour tasks! Whoop!!"

Very few waited to ascertain their positions on the roll after hearing this inspiring intelligence. The whole lot surged out into the drive to make for the nearest telegraph office, to wire home the glad news that at long last they were free of the servitude of pack and spade, and that their wings had finally attained the long-desired span, and that they would be home at the weekend on indefinite leave pending gazetting. Each of them felt that the last lap of the preliminary training was finished, and the sudden nearness of the real thing with all its spell, its myriad chances looming up be-

fore them, as when at the end of a long day's march we round a corner and find ourselves at the foot of the mountain whose crest we have discerned all day, seemed to take their breath away.

Lewis and his staff went home to dress for dinner, since final examinations in the Angels are always followed by a dinner, where everybody is expected to make a speech—a form of amusement little relished by the seraphim and cherubim, even though their throats are by now fairly well hardened by continuous lecturing. The cadets, however, consider speech-making by their unfortunate instructors as only one degree less amusing than a Charlie Chaplin show, and would never allow them to miss the one opportunity they afford the cadets of a real hearty laugh at the instructors' expense; for the sight of Lewis on his hind legs at a farewell dinner, stammering out a halting speech, and wishing that some one would put him out of his misery, consoles many a harassed Angel for the pungent remarks that Lewis has made at his expense on the parades, now happily, for the lucky few, a mere half-forgotten nightmare.

IX. INSPECTIONS.

Few people outside the army realise what an enormous part in the life of the soldier is played by the word "inspection." Hundreds of years ago

the little cherubs who sit aloft at Whitehall were much exercised over the problem of the correct accounting of stores and *personnel*, for they found

that the soldiery of the day were continually losing the property committed to their care by a paternal Government, and on frequent occasions would contrive to lose even the men of a unit. For instance, when a small concentration was ordered near Ebbsfleet at the rumoured arrival of certain piratically inclined gentry, a company commander succeeded in losing his whole company in less than twenty minutes after arriving at the rendezvous, the "Pied Merlin." Indeed the majority of that company were only recovered after a vigorous search on the part of the Huscarles from the G.H.Q., and the transport had to be commandeered to bring them in, so overcome were they with the unusually thirsty weather prevalent at the time. As the senior delinquent explained when appearing before the Thane who commanded the unit: "It wasn't the few glasses as we 'ad had, it was that there sun, sir, somethink hawfull, it were really, sir."

No, this is not a tale of last year's training on the East Coast, but a true extract from the official despatches preserved in the old Record Office at Winchester, a very rare and handsomely illuminated manuscript indeed. But of course the customs of armed men never vary through the ages, as the following little incident may show. When Sir Aurel Stein was exploring in Central Asia on behalf of the Indian Government and the British Museum, in the course of the

excavations carried out in the vicinity of a Chinese frontier post abandoned about two thousand years ago, he unearthed a small packet containing a broken arrow-head. He wondered at the care with which such an obviously useless article had been packed, but on the accompanying inscription being deciphered it turned out to be the Chinese equivalent of a delivery voucher returning one arrow-head (broken) in support of an indent for a new one.

So, as I have said, the Army Council of those days were very busy trying to devise a scheme whereby these frequent losses might be prevented, and some suggested one thing and some another, but nothing appeared to be very effectual, and the cherubs wearied exceedingly of the stale and profitless discussion which led nowhither.

Then at last rose up an old grey-haired cherub who had served with Alfred against the Danes. He was a most distinguished old soldier, and could repeat the Regulations backwards, so that if any one, even Alfred himself, indented for a bowstring or an arrow-head more than he was entitled to, he would reply—

"It's no good, my boy; I've been in the army for fifty years, and it's not in the Regulations, so it *can't be done*. *Vide* equipment tables, para. 193752 (b), as amended by Army Order No. 987564 (d) 23/9/42, and subsequently re-amended by Army Council instructions 12386 (d) 14/3/57.

If you take these in conjunction with Letter No. 2349/b/S.D./3c (equipment), you can see that it is clearly laid down that under no circumstances whatever can strings, bow, or heads, arrow, be issued in excess of the schedule." Then Alfred, whose whole training of badly needed recruits was being hung up for want of a few spare arrows, would blaspheme openly and talk of joining the Danes.

In consequence of his marvellous grasp of the regulations, which were written in very old Saxon and very few people could interpret at all, this cherub had attained to great honours and dignities among the higher circles of cherubs. They gave him a seat on their Witenagemot, as they called the Army Council of those simple days, and when he rose up to speak all the others were dumb.

"In my branch," he said, "we have a daily inspection of all stores and material. It can be carried out very expeditiously, and need not take an officer more than six hours per diem once he gets into the way of it. The result is that we never lose anything whatever, but very frequently make things, since every article found surplus at the inspections is immediately brought on charge. Thus at an inspection last week I found two brand-new swords and a fur-lined coat surplus to my stock, so I immediately took them on to my ledger. We found out afterwards that they belonged to the other two officers on the board, and if

we had not had the inspection system, Government would not now possess these very valuable articles. What I propose is that this system be extended to the other branches of the service, and all commanders ordered to hold as many inspections as possible."

The Council, marvelling at the simplicity of the plan and certain of not returning to regimental duty, gave orders to this effect, and the custom has persisted to the present day. The result is, that of the soldier's life, one-quarter is spent in being inspected; and of the other three-quarters, about four-fifths is spent in preparing to be inspected, while the residue is divided between drill, company training, musketry, and sometimes war.

We have all sorts of inspections according to taste—feet inspections, rifle inspections, gas-helmet inspections, ration inspections, medical inspections, general inspections, &c., &c., *ad infinitum*.

It always happens in the army that after a while, when any innovation proves a success, a special branch of red-winged cherubs with high-sounding titles is created to take charge of it; and so the inspection scheme having proved a *succès fou*, a branch of cherubs was specially appointed to fly round the country inspecting everything and everybody.

In spite of the infinite diversity of the inspections, we may divide them quite easily into two broad classes—

- (1) Those in which the object is to ascertain some special fact—*e.g.*, the condition of certain equipment, or the state of training of a body of men.

- (2) Those in which the object is to "inspect."

The former are carried out by company officers, C.O.'s, and energetic brigadiers at odd intervals, and mean serious trouble when deficiencies are found. They are generally held without previous warning, and are quite simple affairs, requiring no particular explanation.

The second class, however, are much more complex affairs, and though they never lead to any trouble, give a lot of trouble beforehand. They are carried out by the aforesaid specialists at stated intervals, and have special rules. The ordinary procedure is somewhat as follows:—

That energetic brigadier, General Chivvyem Rounde, having assured himself—chiefly at times when no one dreamed of his presence, and by sending spies in the shape of certain hard-working staff officers, who were always bumping into the regiments quite unexpectedly and, of course, accidentally—that two particular battalions of his command are in a highly efficient state and absolutely fit to go to the Front, reports the fact to the War Office, who prepare to send them off. The Inspection branch get to hear of it and say: "But we haven't inspected them yet!!" So the War Office replies, being well

accustomed to the vagaries of the Inspection branch: "Oh, all right, go and inspect them." The Inspection specialists then write down to the brigade in question, saying that General Sir Luke Seeyer will inspect the two regiments the day after to-morrow. The news is passed on to the C.O.'s, and the "Filibusters" immediately fall into a state of nervous prostration. Their C.O., who is of a simple type unaccustomed to the ways of the Inspection Department, takes it very seriously, and redoubles his efforts towards making his battalion a still more efficient fighting unit. Colonel Ian Washe of the Loamshire Fusiliers, however, being well accustomed to these things, sends for his adjutant and says: "Look here, Brown, old Seeyer is going to have a look at us the day after to-morrow. Just get hold of his A.D.C. and find out what are the old boy's pet stunts."

Brown waylays the A.D.C. at his club and learns that the whole result of the inspection will depend on two things—whether the men click their magazines in presenting arms, and whether the officers know the weight of a pull-through or not. Thereupon all the officers are directed to find out the weight of a pull-through, and the rank and file are instructed to loosen the catches of their magazines before the G.O.C. comes on parade. The "Present" sounds like a volley of musketry; even the youngest subaltern knows the exact weight of a pull-through; and

the General congratulates the C.O. on having such a smart battalion.

The C.O. of the Filibusters, on the other hand, suffering from inspection fever, temperature 104·5, having reduced every one to nervous wrecks by personally examining even the men's spare bootlaces and done a twenty-five-mile march in the morning to be sure that the men are quite fit, gets badly slated.

"Bless my soul, sir, I asked one of your subalterns the weight of a pull-through just now, and he didn't know! Didn't know, sir!! A young officer just going to the Front and ignorant of the weight of a pull-through!! While your men, Colonel Jones, handle their rifles as if they were made of sugar! Sugar, sir!! You couldn't have heard that present five yards away. I've never seen such a lot of half-trained recruits in my life!!"—and goes off fuming.

The Fallen Angels, like other units, have of course to conform to this old-established army custom, and from time to time their *morale* is shaken by the appearance of wandering inspectors, more particularly when a batch of about-to-be gazetted fledglings leave.

Thus, one day in late August, the Cadet Company billets were in a finely chaotic state. The orderly-room of No. 2 Company, usually the home of a decorous silence broken only by the monotonous click of the typewriter or the still more monotonous drawl of Lewis "telling off" a delinquent, was

invaded by a surging mob of cadets, each more anxious than his neighbour to hand over his equipment to the quartermaster-sergeant, and be rid at last of the pack that had galled his shoulders for month after weary month. Round about in the passages outside lay kit-bags and valises, gladstones and suit-cases, all strapped and labelled.

Rupy of Bavaria was for once making friends of the mammon of iniquity that he had habitually strafed daily for the past few months, and reflecting that the next time he met the cadets they would be fully fledged seraphim and have to be saluted, instead of saluting him as had been the case hitherto.

The quartermaster-sergeant was hunting through bundles of equipment in search of deficiencies, and examining the rifles and bayonets to see if they were more "Unserviceable" than they had any right to be.

In the centre of the room cadet under-officer Goodring was clamouring vainly for the platoon commanders to whom he had orders to issue. The under-officers are a feature of the cadet companies, borrowed from the Sandhurst system. Although the company officers can do a great deal to keep up the spirit and tone of the company, they cannot be omnipresent, and neither can they be quite so much in touch with the cadets as a cadet. Consequently a very carefully selected cadet is appointed under-officer, and no light job is his, for he has to replace the officers when

these are away and understudy them at all times. Further, he himself is only a cadet, and every one can realise that a pretty strong character is needed to maintain discipline among an unruly hundred or so of your equals. But the under-officers always justify their selection, and profit greatly by the experience. Lucky the regiments that get them as subalterns, especially those of the type of Goodring, who, in addition to being all that the most exigent mess could demand as a sub, is in addition gifted in a rare degree with the power of handling men, and a more than average brain.

Outside in the garden Phayle and Lewis were "chipping" Gamaliel, newly returned from the Front, and asking if it was true that they still have trenches in France. Some while back the powers that be decided that it would be good for the seraphim if they were shot over for a space. So they despatched them in batches to the Front, provided them with tin hats, and planted them out in the front-line trenches, where they enjoyed all the amusements provided free by the grateful Boche for his dear friends the English, being shelled and bombed to their hearts' content. After a while they returned to Loamington, making mysterious references to what they'd seen and done, and saying, "Hush, hush," like conspirators if questioned too much.

In consequence of their trip they now say to the cadets, "Thus did we at Ypres," or "This way saw I at the Hohen-

zollern," instead of "So is it written in the books from the Front," and the weight of their lectures increases accordingly.

The general atmosphere of the billets, albeit dusty, was charged with high good-humour and cheerfulness. There was reason enough to rejoice, because some thirty cadets had at last, after countless months of work, succeeded in passing out at the final examination, and were to depart that very evening on indefinite leave pending gazetting to their regiments. Scarce one of them but had a new Sam Browne all ready in his quarters to don ere he entered again the bosom of his family for the last little flutter of admiration of female relatives (preferably other people's) before going out "There."

For the last thirty-six hours life had been one unending succession of speeches: the company commanders had harangued; the C.O. had discoursed; and now as a last nerve test before they left, a real live general had been imported to inspect them and address them a few well-chosen words prior to their departure into the great world of war. So they were hastily getting rid of their ill-fitting garments and their worn accoutrements and preparing to turn out in their "glad rags" for this final inspection.

In the Fallen Angels cadet battalion "inspection fever" is conspicuous by its absence, because our C.O. is of the non-flusterable type, and has been an A.D.C. himself in his day. The special stunt which

rejoices this particular General is that on the command "Stand easy," every man shall shift his hand up his rifle, smartly clicking the piling swivel, thereby producing a sharp rattle. Sir Brazen Kapp (the inspecting General) has also an idea that every officer should be thoroughly conversant with his men's family affairs. Lewis, knowing this, has warned his company that, if the G.O.C. asks him any such questions, they are to acknowledge instantaneously the number of wives and children he credits them with; for, like most of the cherubim, he believes in the speedy answer that turneth away inspectional wrath.

"Now, if the General asks me about any of your families, and I reply that any one of you owns a wife and six children, remember that you d——d well do own them. . . . Understand, Jones-Greville?" Jones-Greville, a young bachelor, blushing answers that he does.

Previous to inspection by the red-winged ones every one else appears to be seized by the same mania, with the result that No. 2 Cadet Company's programme was somewhat as follows:—

- 2 P.M. . Inspection by the section commanders.
- 2.15 P.M. Inspection by the platoon commanders.
- 2.30 P.M. Inspection by Phayle and Gamaliel in their capacity of half-company commanders.

2.45 P.M. Detailed inspection by Lewis.

3 P.M. . March to parade-ground.

3.15 P.M. Inspection by O.C. battalion.

These are of course only little preliminary canthers, and it is not till 3.30 or thereabouts that the real high-class article commences. As Railling said to Robinson during a stand easy, "We might be the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's by the way they rush to look at us. If we charged 6d. a time we'd get enough to have a bust in town."

The cadets are drawn up in line facing the road by which the General will come, the company commanders in front. On Sir Brazen Kapp's arrival a general salute is given, and the old boy touches his hat in approved General Staff style, which is much more ornate and imposing than the method adopted by the smaller cherubim, and accompanied by three Staff officers, the C.O., Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the twin "adjers," and various lesser luminaries, proceeds to walk along the line, stopping here and there to ask a cadet's age or how much service he has. Stopping in front of Greenway, he turns to Lewis and asks if this man is married, and, if so, how many children he has. Lewis briskly replies, "Yes, sir; he's got two children—a boy of five and a girl of three." The General, making some remark about the youthful appearance of

this father of a family, moves on, and Greenway, who has only been married five months, glares at Lewis's back.

Having walked round, he expresses a desire to see the cadets at work, and bids them carry on with their usual programme under the command of the senior cadet. Luckily this also has been foreseen, and one company hastily proceeds to do "section rushes," to the great detriment of their new uniform, while No. 2, under Lance-Corporal Rose, investigate the mysteries of the "Standing, Load," and other secrets of the art of musketry. No. 4, wiser in their generation, content themselves with practising fixing and unfixing bayonets in a methodical fashion. The General walks about criticising in an indulgent fashion, and the majority of cadets acquit themselves quite satisfactorily, but one or two are evidently a little rattled by the presence of the great man.

He then congratulates the C.O. on having such a smart and well-trained battalion: "Handle their arms beautifully, the stand easy was the best I've seen for some time;" at this point Tweedledee catches Shipman's eye and is overwhelmed by a nasty fit of coughing. The General then explains to the C.O. that he would like to say a few words to the departing cadets. They are therefore drawn up in three sides of a square, of which the Staff occupy the fourth side, and Sir Brazen Kapp proceeds to the real

business of the day, the farewell address.

As he and every one else present knows, the inspection *quâd* inspection is purely a matter of form; all the examinations are over, and the little criticisms he has offered about the work (which, as he is quite aware, has been prepared beforehand) don't really mean anything at all.

What he is really here for is, in the capacity of a very distinguished veteran soldier, to try and give the youngsters just stepping on to the first rung of the ladder a few helpful hints and tips on the way they should conduct themselves, and to give them a little idea of the way they must try to carry out the duties that will fall to their lot. It is not that he is going to tell them anything new, all that he says, and more besides, they have heard time and again from the lips of seraphim and cherubim; but frequently we hear things over and over again, and heed them not at all until at some psychological moment of our lives we hear them from some one who puts the old saw in quite a new way, and we realise the force of it and begin to shape our actions accordingly.

The old General has just such a moment now. The course is over, and every one of the cadets that he is addressing knows for certain that in a few days he will become an officer; the last lessons are finished and the scholars are about to become

the teachers. The last two days have been a round of gaiety after the long strain of the course, and every one's hearts and hopes are high. In a little while they will go off parade as privates for the last time.

It is a psychological moment, and long after they have forgotten the very names of Lewis and Phayle and Gamaliel, the Angels will remember the General's words just in the way that he is telling them, how he can recall the words spoken by the inspecting officer to *his* batch of cadets when they left Sandhurst thirty-eight years ago.

He doesn't make a high-flown speech, but it is a good one, bringing out little points in the way that an old man can when speaking to young ones who he knows will listen to his counsel; for although we laugh among ourselves at old Kapp's weakness for clicking, piling swivels, and other little bits of military eyewash, we recognise him for what he really is, a very honest and hard-working soldier.

So we listen with the greatest attention to his little homily on what an officer should strive to be. He doesn't say anything about glory, but a lot about duty; about the putting of a clean finish to each bit of work we do, and about the doing of our allotted task whole-heartedly and without murmuring. Hitherto we have chiefly regarded him as a rather fussy old gentleman, inclined to lay great stress on what appear to us to be very

finicky details of drill and routine, and more or less of a nuisance in many ways. We have wondered sometimes how he came by that rainbow of medal ribbons, war ones nearly all of them, none of your coronation and durbar and suchlike, the whole topped by a well-earned D.S.O. His limp informs us too that even the red-winged cherubs are not exempt from wounds.

But now he speaks to us for once as a man to man, stripping off as it were the mask of his rank, and showing us the hidden ideals that he has striven after all through his long and honourable career. He pictures for us in plain simple words the embodiment of all the high hopes and ideals towards which he would have us bend our steps, putting in here and there little anecdotes of old campaigns, which show us what heights of self-forgetful heroism can be scaled by men whose sole thought is to do their duty.

Lastly, he lays stress on the implicit loyalty to our superiors, which is such an essential to the harmonious working of an army.

"Doubtless," he says, "many of us feel that we could run the show a good deal better than General Joffre and Sir Douglas Haig rolled into one, for it is only human nature to want to criticise those above us, just as it is only human nature to wish to get into a hole when there are bullets knocking around. But we don't do the latter in front of our men, we set them an ex-

ample by standing up and pretending we don't want to get under cover. Similarly we must set them an example in not giving way to the tendency of criticising those above us. If you feel at any time that you must crab some one or bust, then take your dearest friend aside and crab every one from the C-in-C. downwards, and you will feel better and no harm will be done. But *never* criticise your superiors in public, for if you do your men will soon criticise *you*.

"And now," he concludes, "as an old soldier at the end of his career, I wish you all, gentlemen, who are just entering the noble profession of arms, the best of all possible good luck. I hope that you will apply to the best of your ability the sound principles that your instructors have taught you during your stay here, and I would ask you to remember that the words 'British Officer' have always been a synonym for all that is understood by the most

honourable interpretation of the word 'Gentleman,' and remind you that the unsullied prestige of the British Officer is in your hands to uphold or destroy as you will."

He finishes amid a dead silence, and for a breathing-space not a cadet moves, for the General's words have gone home, and each one of us feels thrust in upon himself, wondering by how much we fall short of the General's standard.

Then, as he turns away, the charm is snapped by the sharp word of command that flings us back into line, and we break away by companies, swinging off in fours past the General down the road to the station. But even when the "March at ease" is given, we are for once a little silent, a shade thoughtful, and Wren reflects the feeling of us all when he says to Goodring: "I didn't think old Kapp could talk like that—seemed to get right inside one's mind and point out all one's weak points."

X. CONCLUSION.

No. 2 Cadet Company is now no longer No. 2, for it has changed its title for that of "A" Company, and with its three sister units has finally attained its majority and separated from the parent stock. The four companies now stand on their own sturdy legs, and, having been provided with a suitable headquarter staff, are officially described on pay memos. and indents as

No. XXX. Officer Cadet Battalion.

Consequently, this story without a plot must now come to an end, for, having changed our name and style, we are no longer the "Fallen Angels." Further, in this growing process not only has our designation been altered, but there have been certain changes in the personnel; since, beside the usual outward flow of newly

fledged subalterns, some of the cherubim and seraphim, at the verdict of medical boards that decreed them once more sufficiently fit in wind and limb to be shot at again by the Hun, have departed on their several ways.

Vergers left some time back for the storm centre of the Somme valley, where he is once again leading a company of one of the best regiments in the British Army. "Jock" has fled back to the "Land o' Cakes," jubilant at being quit of the horrible trials of "lecturing and sich-like," and hoping shortly to lead a new gathering of the clans to Sunny France, so long a second home to Scots. Lewis is ploughing the Mediterranean *en route* once more for the dreamy, indolent East—looking back not regretfully on the months of good hard work in Loamington, but joyful of heart at being again a sound man. Others of lesser fame have also gone. Meyerstein, Gabbler, Longshanks, and many another, are at last busy in the "real thing," killing or trying to kill Germans; others, again, are sleeping their last sleep in the scarred, battered Via Dolorosa, which runs across the fair face of Belgium and France, from the Channel to the far-off Swiss mountains, like a great unhealed wound. To these the daily roar of the guns and the rattle of musketry conveys no more than the child's rattle to the grown man, since they have "grown up" for ever.

But day by day this wound shows more and more the promise of healing, for Time, the greatest friend to all in sorrow or distress, promises before long to bring us victorious peace, and each day shows yet more clearly that the German power has shot its bolt and is even now on the decline, while we are moving slowly but surely on the up-grade.

Some day when the war is a mere nightmare of the past, and those of us who are left meet together again to talk of the great deeds of the men who are gone, then surely we shall find some space in our memories for the Fallen Angels and the other kindred units who made it possible to officer our great new armies, and so enable them to take the field. Soldiers are necessary, guns and shells essential, but all these avail nothing unless we have leaders; and of all the hard tasks of a sudden war, the hardest of all is to produce the requisite numbers of subordinate leaders. We owe it to the unfailing devotion of those units of the Territorial Force who, from the beginning of the war and even before it, laboured unceasingly to produce such leaders against the evil days that every thinking soldier knew must come, sooner or later, that we have succeeded in overcoming a difficulty that many people declared to be insurmountable.

"GANPAT."

THOMAS WOLSEY: MINISTER OF WAR.

IT has always been the fond boast of the English that they "muddle through," however hard they are beset. The boast is not the boast of wisdom and courage. He, indeed, is foolish who would let his bravery outrun his prudence; and there is no merit in success which comes by accident. The truth is that he who first made a virtue of carelessness deserved very ill of his country. Even if we praise the valour which refuses to acknowledge defeat, we must esteem yet more highly the foresight and design which make defeat impossible from the first. However, our vice and our boast find their origin in the very beginnings of our history. We have always thrown away wilfully our armies and our energies, and not always has a War Minister come in the nick of time to save us from the consequences of our folly.

One such Minister was Thomas Wolsey, a spiritual ancestor in the direct line of William Pitt, father and son, of Castlereagh, and of other stout contrivers of victory. Born to a great inheritance of wisdom, he was a natural Minister of State, as Shakespeare was a natural poet. The genius which God gave him he marvellously perfected, until he lived in treaties and thought in campaigns. The very limitations of his talent favoured his success. Friend as he was of scholars, prodigal

as he proved himself of learned houses, he was not of the breed of Erasmus and More. A churchman by profession, he was no profound theologian; of the Reformation, which in his day tore Europe in pieces, he saw none other than the political aspect. But if his King and his country were touched, he was instant in defence as he was prudent in counsel. So there was a oneness in his character which made him irresistible to England's enemies. Endowed with such a weight of authority as scarce another has ever upheld, he was able by a word or a gesture to enforce his will upon the world. Moreover, as his biographer says, "he had a special gift of natural eloquence, with a filed tongue to pronounce the same, that he was able to allure and persuade all men to his purpose." And happy indeed was the monarch who might lean upon his patriotism and experience!

When Henry VIII. came to the throne he wished nothing so ardently as to distinguish himself in the pageantries of war and peace. His flamboyant demeanour, the gaiety of his aspect, were as far as the poles apart from the hard, penurious austerity of his father, whose hoarded wealth he was presently to squander with a lavish hand. The testimony of foreigners is unanimous in enthusiasm. To choose one of many tributes, here is what

Giustinian, the Venetian ambassador, reported of him to the Seignior: "His Majesty," says he, "is twenty-nine years old, and very handsome. Nature could not have done more for him. He is much handsomer than any other sovereign in Christendom; a great deal handsomer than the King of France; very fair, and his whole frame admirably proportioned. On hearing that Francis I. wore a beard, he allowed his own to grow; and as it is reddish, he has now got a beard that looks like gold. He is very accomplished; a good musician; composes well; is a most capital horseman; a fine jouter; speaks good French, Latin, and Spanish; is very religious; hears three masses daily when he hunts, and sometimes five on other days. He hears the Office every day in the Queen's Chamber: that is to say, vesper and compline. He is very fond of hunting, and never takes his diversion without tiring eight or ten horses, which he causes to be stationed beforehand along the line of country he means to take; and when one is tired he mounts another, and before he gets home they are all exhausted. He is extremely fond of tennis, at which game it is the prettiest thing to see him play, his fair skin glowing through a shirt of the finest texture." The Venetian's panegyric was well deserved. In brief, it seemed to an expectant Europe that there was nothing which this paragon of all the virtues could not accomplish, with the aid of the wisest of living counsellors.

Truly, "my King and I" might have inspired all their adversaries with a proper fear.

And yet, at the outset, Henry and his adviser were compelled to set England right in the eyes of the Continent. Her own troubles had driven her from the councils of the great Powers. The Wars of the Roses had taken their toll not only of men but of repute, and upon the seventh Henry had fallen the dull duty of re-establishing the credit of his realm. But Henry VIII. was rich and ambitious, and he lost little time in attempting to prove his prowess in the field. His first campaign was a dismal failure. In alliance with Ferdinand, his father-in-law, he devised an attack upon France. An expedition left England in May 1512 for Spain, and arrived a month later at Fuenterrabia. Here disaster upon disaster overtook the English. They were ill-fed, and not housed at all. The Spanish suns burnt them; the Spanish rains brought pestilence upon them. Deprived of the beef and beer which were the staple of their diet, they had no stomach for the fight. Above all, the British soldiers clamoured for their beer, of which their normal allowance was a gallon a head a day, and without which they refused to move hand or foot. "And it please your Grace," wrote Stile to the King, "the greatest lack of victuals that is here is of beer, for your subjects had lever for to drink beer than wine or cider; for the hot wine doth harm them, and the cider doth cast them in disease and sick-

ness." Nor even had they been willing to fight were they given the opportunity. Ferdinand, after his wont, took refuge in intrigue and delay. And the English soldiers mutinied first, and afterwards went on strike for higher pay. Finally, they threw off all discipline, and sailed for home without orders. The humiliation of England and her King was complete. "You see," said the Emperor, "Englishmen have so long abstained from war, they lack experience from disuse."

Then it was that Wolsey changed in a flash the whole aspect of affairs. Though he held no higher office than the King's Almoner, he took sole charge of the campaign which in the following year was fought in France, and proved that he possessed all the qualities of a Minister at War. "Proceeding then in fortune's blissfulness," says Wolsey's biographer, "it chanced the wars between France and England to be open, in so much as the King, being fully persuaded and resolved, in his most royal person to invade his foreign enemies with a puissant army, to delay their hault brags, within their own territory: wherefore it was thought very necessary that this royal enterprise should be speedily provided and plentifully furnished in every degree of things apt and convenient for the same; the expedition whereof the King's highness thought no man's wit so meet, for policy and painful travail, as his well-beloved Almoner's was, to whom therefore he committed

his whole affiance and trust therein. And he being nothing scrupulous in anything that the King would command him to do, although it seemed to other very difficile, took upon him the whole charge and burden of all this business, and proceeded so therein, that he brought all things to a good pass and purpose in a right decent order, as of all manner of victuals, provisions, and other necessaries, convenient for so noble a voyage and puissant army." Cavendish was no politician. He knew not why England and France were at war. He did know that, when once war was declared, the King could find no better man to think and to do than his Almoner, Wolsey.

With the expedition of 1512 as a warning before his eyes, Wolsey set himself to create and equip a new army. The rank and file, which refused to bear the yoke of discipline in Spain, the officers who knew not how to command, were replaced by men who had learned to obey, by commanders who insisted upon obedience. The conditions of the time made his duties easier than they would be to-day. His hand was not weakened by the memory of an ancient and obsequious friendship with the enemy. It was not his business to discover the path of popularity. He was not asked to conciliate the rebel or to keep the constituencies in good humour. In brief, he was an autocrat. All the functions of Government were concentrated in him and him

alone. He was not a member of a war committee; he was a whole war committee in his own proper person.¹ Nothing was beyond the scope of his activity; nothing was too low for the grasp of his intelligence. Whatever men he needed for the campaign were at his disposal. The pitiful divorce of the citizen from the soldier had not been made in Henry VIII.'s reign, and nothing was necessary but to issue Commissions of Array to the Sheriffs of the southern counties, "to make proclamations for all males between sixty and sixteen to be in readiness at an hour's warning to resort to such place in the said county as shall be assigned." The notice, short and sharp, was obeyed perforce, and Wolsey might boast that he sent across the Channel an army of 40,000 men, armed and provisioned — the largest force that ever England landed on the Continent before the year 1914. It is not easy to exaggerate the greatness of Wolsey's achievement. His system of transport fell very far below our modern standard, and the heavy loads put upon our ships were all the heavier, because the warfare of the sixteenth century was in one sense far more elaborate than the warfare of to-day. When the Tudors met their enemies in the field, war was a pageant as well as a business. It was not enough for them to beat their enemies; they must

beat them in accord with the splendid tradition of chivalry. If Henry VIII. took the field as a soldier, he must be housed as a king. The tents in which he and his generals lived were symbols of the royal magnificence, and for the glory and honour of England no detail of display might be omitted. And while Wolsey was asked to remember all the trappings of kingship, he forgot nothing that was needed for the carriage and maintenance of a big army. As Mr Law points out, malt, beans, oats, oxen, and lambs were ordered in vast quantities to be collected together at Calais, and so well were the orders carried out, that "40,000 men were living in the camp before Tournay in time of war," Richard Pace tells us, "far more cheaply than they lived at home in time of peace." And in all these preparations Wolsey was the moving spirit. He became learned in all the matters of commissariat. He was busy, says Brewer, "with beer, beef, and biscuit, transports, foists, and empty casks." With a full knowledge that the lack of beer in Spain had caused a mutiny, he was resolved that no English soldier should lack his gallon a day. A campaign thus well organised could have but one end. Teronenne fell into the hands of the English on August 22; Tournay's surrender followed a month later; and Wolsey, having justified the

¹ Those who would measure the full achievement of Wolsey may be referred to Dr Brewer's great history of Henry VIII., and to Mr Ernest Law's essay, 'England's First Great War Minister' (London: Bell & Sons), in which the Almoner of Henry VIII. is set vividly before us, and an appropriate moral is drawn from his career.

King's confidence, held and maintained for many a year his supremacy in the council chamber.

Thus it was that the English army, well trained and well equipped, fought with all the pomp and gallantry ordained by the chivalrous spirit of the age. The aspect and behaviour of the soldiers were the wonder of foreign nations. Here is the testimony of one Italian, quoted by Mr Law: "Choicer troops, in more perfect order, have not been seen for years. Amongst them are from 9000 to 10,000 heavy barbed cavalry, and 8000 light horse; the infantry includes 14,000 archers, and there are 2000 mounted bowmen. . . . Others have spears, halberts, and axes, and cannon that would suffice to conquer Hell." So much for their equipment. Their conduct, if we may believe another Italian, fell not below the high level of Henry V.'s, of Cromwell's, or of Kitchener's men. "They are efficient troops," we are told, "well accoutred, not barefooted like those of Italy, men who do not go to rob, but to gain honour, and who march at their own cost. They do not take wenches with them, and they are not profane swearers, like our soldiers. Indeed, there are few who fail to recite daily the office of Our Lady's rosary." So our soldiers, then as now, "went into battle as though they were going to a sport or game," and if they fought always with clean hands and stout hearts, it was due above all to the inspira-

tion of Wolsey. The only blot upon our army was the conduct of our German allies. Nothing could check their ingrained love of rapine and sacrilege. They proved themselves worthy ancestors of the modern Huns, whom we know too well. The testimony of a Spaniard, cited by Mr Law, cannot be gainsaid. The Spaniard complains, as well he might, of "their arrogance, ruffianism, and beastliness, which made them firebrands and a source of danger among whomsoever they went." And that nothing should be missing in this prophetic parallel, the Spaniard asserts that "such is their greediness that any one of them is ready to run the risk of introducing the plague into the ranks of the army in which they are serving by recklessly entering a village or farmhouse known to be stricken with the disease, simply with the object of stealing a chicken." Strange, indeed, is this immutability of the Germans, and Mr Law does well to close his chapter upon them with the familiar words of Froissart: "Maudits, soient-ils, ce sont gens sans pitié et sans honneur."

It was, then, the campaign of 1513 which assured the rapid rise of Wolsey. Honours and offices were showered upon him, and at each step he increased marvellously in splendour and esteem. He lived, as I have said, in an age of pageantry, and he outdid even the King his Master in the magnificence of his state. He moved always as though upon parade. Poleaxes and golden

candlesticks preceded him wherever he went. Cavendish, his simple biographer, has enumerated the yeomen, the cooks, the servants of his household, with a proper pride, and makes us wonder that the many-coloured trappings of Wolsey's life did not strangle life itself. The gorgeous tapestries of Hampton Court Palace, which were changed once a week; the fine cloths of diaper; the cupboards of plate, parcel-gilt; the other cupboards of gilt plate, very sumptuous and of the newest fashions; the lights of wax as big as torches; the silver and gilt plate, which hung on the walls to give light in the chamber,—all these marvels surpass the fancies of fairyland. Nor was there any lack at Hampton Court of masks, tourneys, of those sports which were a necessary part of the pomp of the Tudors. And Wolsey's own splendour and solemn cheer must not be mistaken for mere vainglory. They were but images of his inward ambition, the signs of his overweening and justified pride. Moreover, there was in them a basis of sound sense. Wolsey knew the English people as he knew the English King, and he saw plainly that he could govern them only by flattering their love of display. The mob might gird at his extravagance, the satirists might hurl their insults at "the butcher's dog"; but Wolsey cared not. He was no butcher's dog, that he should walk the path of humility. He believed that the highest honours to be won on earth, even the papacy itself, were within his grasp;

and the magnificence of Hampton Court seemed to him a worthy means to an end, and not the "fantastical dream" of Cavendish's imagining.

And Wolsey, for all his splendour, showed himself always the kindly champion of the poor. Giustinian, the Venetian Ambassador, and panegyrist of Henry VIII., has sketched Wolsey's portrait also in words. After praising his eloquence, his ability, and his energy; after admitting that he alone transacted the business, which in Venice occupied all the magistracies, all the offices, and all the councils, he thus describes him: "He is pensive, and has the reputation of being extremely just. He favours the people, especially the poor, hearing their suits and seeking to despatch them instantly. He also makes the lawyers plead gratis for paupers. He is in very great repute, seven times more so than if he were Pope." That was one side of the omnipotent Wolsey. The other side is still more wonderful, when we remember the arrogance of the King. "Wolsey is the person," Giustinian goes on, "who rules both the King and the kingdom. On my first arrival in England he used to say, 'His Majesty will do so and so'; subsequently by degrees he went on forgetting himself, and began saying, 'We shall do so and so'; at this present he has reached such a pitch that he says, 'I shall do so and so.'"

At that pitch he stayed for some twenty years. Not only

was he Minister of War, he was also Lord Chancellor and Lord of the Treasury. He held bishoprics, and wore a Cardinal's hat at the same time that he governed the country. He was in full charge of foreign affairs, and since it was in them that he was most intimately at home, he made himself arbiter of the destinies of Europe. The most powerful man of his time, not only in England but in the world, he used his influence always like a patriot. His policy of domination was uniformly successful. If we remember what England was before his Great War of 1513, and recall the height to which he raised her, we can measure vaguely the worth of his achievement. In all his thoughts and in all his deeds he was the pious servant of England, and he had the power to serve her because he was one of those rare men who at the same time could take large views and not overlook the importance of details. Despite the detraction of the chronicles, and the envy of those who divided his offices among them, he remains unassailable in glory and devotion. When he fell, the hopes of England fell for a time with him. The King did not recover from his loss. Without Wolsey's guiding hand to sustain him, he lapsed into the middle-class Bluebeard of popular history, the monarch who saw no other way out from a distasteful marriage than murder.

That Wolsey should fall was inevitable. In the very hey-

day of his power he was but preparing the necessary last act of his own drama. That there were contributory causes of disaster is obvious. The part which he had played in the divorce, the influence of Anne Boleyn, who could not forget her resentment against the Cardinal, helped in his undoing. Then there was the sudden rise to power of new Ministers, and the King's inherited greed for the possessions of other men—two potent influences against him. But it was chiefly the nemesis which lies in wait for the greatest of men that brought the Cardinal low. So high had he climbed, that no other summit remained within the scope of his vision. And seated upon the topmost pinnacle of fame, he could change neither his purpose nor his method. The young generation misunderstood his pomp and made light of his services. "The King has gone beyond me," he says in Shakespeare's play, in sad explanation of his ruin. And yet the ruin itself was not so sad as the manner of it. Cavendish has left us an imperishable picture of his master's last days. We see sketched with a simple hand the great Cardinal riding up Putney Hill on his mule, and dismounting to kneel in the mire, with bowed head, before Sir Harry Norris. "I am sorry," quoth he to Norris, "that I have no condign token to send to the King. But if ye would, and of request, present the King with this poor Fool, I trust His Highness would accept him well, for surely for a noble-

man's pleasure he is worth a thousand pounds." We see six tall yeomen sent to convey the Fool to the Court, for the poor Fool, constant in fidelity, refused except by force to leave his master. And so he came to his place at Esher, and found no peace there. For his enemies at Court feared him more after his fall than in his prosperity, because they thought that by the King's favour he might be readopted into authority. "Therefore," says Cavendish, "they took this order among them in their matters, that daily they would send something or do something against him, wherein they thought they might give him a cause of heaviness or lamentation." Thus one day they would persuade the King to dismiss some of his gentlemen, another day they would have him stripped of some of his promotions. But he was a brave and a wise man, and he bore all their malice in patience.

The King, wavering always between fear and affection, knew not how to treat his ancient favourite. One day, when the Cardinal fell sick, he bade his physician, Dr Butts, go in haste to Esher. Now Dr Butts told the King that, if he would have the Cardinal to live, he must despatch him straightway a comfortable message. "Even so will I," said the King, "and by you." And he sent him as a token of goodwill and favour a ring, which he knew well, for himself had given it to the King, and which contained a ruby, where-

on was engraved the King's visage, "as lively counterfeit," says Cavendish, "as was possible to be devised." But no favour went with the gift, and Wolsey, still beset by the restlessness of disease, must needs leave Esher at once. And so he began his wanderings, sojourning a while at Richmond, and then setting forth, when money had been found for the purpose, to visit his benefice of York. Wherever he went on his journey he was received with a kindly enthusiasm by the people. When he could, he recovered something of his old state and much of his ancient charity. Shorn of his honours and his wealth, he took pleasure in the one boon left him, the boon of liberty. To Cavendish, who wondered why he had confessed himself guilty in the *præmunire*, he replied that he would rather yield and confess the matter, "committing the sole sum thereof, as he did, unto the King's clemency and mercy, and live at large, like a poor vicar, than to lie in prison with all the goods and honours that he had." Yet was there no resting-place for the poor vicar's head. He travelled, it seems, to escape not from his enemies but from himself. From Peterborough to Southwell he wandered, from Southwell to Saxby, and then, about the feast of St Michael, he took the road towards Cawood Castle, "where he lay long after with much honour and love of the county, both of the worshipful and the simple." So he, who yester-

day had been the ruler of Europe, spent his days in religious observances and in humility of soul, still dreading and still conscious of an impending doom. The omens were bad, and omens meant a vast deal to his pious mind. After dinner upon All Hallows' Day, one Dr Augustine, physician, "having a boisterous gown of black velvet upon him," overthrew a cross which stood in the corner, and which fell upon Dr Bonar's head, drawing blood. "Hath it drawn any blood?" asked the Cardinal. "Yea, forsooth, my lord," answered Cavendish, "as it seemeth me." For Wolsey it was a *malum omen*, for in the signification, which he presently gave it, he was the cross, and Augustine, who overthrew it, was he who should accuse him, which came to pass. So that when the Earl of Northumberland and Master Walshe came to arrest him on the false charge of high treason, they came to one expecting the worst disaster which might befall him. Yet he kept his courage high and would not obey the Earl's arrest, because the Earl refused to show his commission. "I trow, gentleman," said he to Walshe, "ye be one of the King's privy chamber; your name, I suppose, is Walshe; I am content to yield unto you, but not to my Lord of Northumberland without I see his commission." And when Cavendish bade him be of good cheer, for he could surely clear himself of all the surmised accusations of his enemies, "Yea," quoth he, with

the pride of one who had been Lord Chancellor and Archbishop, "if I may come to my answer, I fear no man alive; for he liveth not upon the earth that shall look upon this face (pointing to his own face) shall be able to accuse me of any untruth." And what wonder was it that, at the last dinner which he ate as a free man, there was not a dry eye among those who sat at table with him!

When on the morrow he took his departure, riding upon a mule, the people of the county to the number of three thousand bade him farewell, crying with a loud voice, "God save your Grace." And as they rode he asked Cavendish whither they led him that night, and when he was told to Pomfret, "Alas," said he, "shall I go to the castle, and lie there, and die like a dog?" But it was not at the castle of sinister memories, but at the abbey that they lodged; and so, still accompanied by thousands of sorrowing people, they came to Sheffield Park, and there abode several weeks, until Sir William Kingston, Constable of the Tower, came with a guard to conduct him to the King's Majesty. His friends hoped that Kingston's coming was a token of the King's favour towards Wolsey, who would now at last be heard in his own defence. But in the Cardinal's ears the mere name of Kingston had the sound of doom. The soothsayers had long ago predicted that at Kingston he would have his end, and though he

had always avoided the passage through the town of that name, he saw that at last the prophecy was coming true. However, he was subject to fortune, as he said, and to fortune he submitted himself. And then disease came suddenly upon him, relieving him of prison and robbing the greedy King of his prey. When he reached Leicester Abbey he knew himself a dying man. "Father Abbot," said he, "I am come hither to leave my bones among you." And as the sickness increased and he found no hope of recovery, he summoned Sir William Kingston to him and made the speech upon which Shakespeare has conferred a gracious immortality. "Well, well, Master Kingston," said he, "I see the matter against me how it is framed; but if I had served God as diligently as I have done the King, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs." Thereafter he would have Kingston commend him to the King, and warned him to be well advised what matter he put in the King's head, "for," said he, "ye shall never put it out again." And lastly, he urged the King's Majesty, through Kingston, to keep a vigilant eye upon the pernicious sect of Lutherans, and thus, having delivered his supreme message, he died, as he prophesied, as the clock struck eight.

When Cavendish brought Henry VIII. the tidings of

the death of his faithful servant, the King received the news with his wonted composure. He was shooting with the bow, and finished his sport before he listened to the tragic story which Cavendish had to tell. And then, having wished liefer than twenty thousand pounds that Wolsey had lived, he asked incontinently for some fifteen hundred pounds, which Wolsey had delivered sealed to a certain priest. When Cavendish had satisfied his avarice, the King demanded that this gear should be kept secret between them, and delivered that homily upon discretion which will be ever memorable. "Three may keep counsel," said he, "if two be away; and if I thought that my cap knew my counsel, I would cast it into the fire and burn it." Thus he passed to what he thought were weightier matters, recking not that he had lost the wisest, staunchest counsellor that ever stood by the side of an ambitious king; and if we read without distaste Cavendish's homily upon the mutability of vain honours and the brittle assurance of abundance, those commonplaces of truth which we expect at the end of a Greek tragedy, we may remember with gratitude that Wolsey, fulfilling his genius in many ways, was one among the greatest of our Ministers of War, and that he still remains to his humbler successors a shining example of lofty courage and tireless energy.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

MY ALBANIAN WINTER.

BY OFFICIER DE LIAISON.

HALF an hour before dawn one day in November 1915 an Italian destroyer lowered a boat off the Bay of San Giovanni di Medua and landed some nine British officers (*quorum pars magna*) on the beach. Medua consists of a cluster of stone cottages in a strip of marsh, just large enough to make the malaria endemic, which nestles at the foot of the Albanian coast hills. It has no inn, but there is a sort of village shop which sells liquor, and to this we were conducted. Our baggage, including stores with which we were to feed ourselves for a period of two months, had all been sent off the day before by an Italian fishing-boat, but we had not been landed half an hour before the news arrived that the baggage-ship had been sunk by an Austrian submarine three miles down the coast. For the next five months the wardrobe of the party consisted of the clothes in which they then stood. In this disaster the writer had a private grief. Having travelled in these parts before, I had taken the precaution on my way through Rome to lay in a store of Alban wine in large demijohns containing ten or twelve firkins apiece. One of these demijohns I had managed to bring with me on the destroyer, so that the party

was not without the rudiments of a breakfast. But there were five more, like unto it, lying at the bottom of the Adriatic.

It now appeared, however, that Judson, also a traveller, had similarly retained by way of hand-luggage a "chop-box," one of these wooden boxes fitted with the tinned delicacies which British officers like. Judson is a very remarkable man. He has spent his life travelling all over the world, and has learnt no language but English in the course of it. Judson says, "I cannot see the use of other languages. I always get on perfectly well with the natives," and it is quite true. He now set the natives to work to make porridge with a tin of Quaker Oats.

"I daresay you've not seen Quaker Oats before," said Judson, speaking slowly, so that the Albanian housewife could understand, "but you make it just the same as with oatmeal."

"*Po! Po!*" said the Albanian respectfully. "*Tcha thot xotnia?*" ("What does the lord say?") she added, when Judson had finished his instructions.

While we were sitting down to the upshot of these instructions, the Austrian submarine turned up. Proceeding insolently right into the bay not more than 250 yards from

land, she fired three torpedoes, sinking a fishing-boat. One of the torpedoes landed on the beach but did not explode. The Albanians gathered round, and began to mock it and poke it with sticks.

On the following day we proceeded to Scutari, one day's drive when the road is in a tolerable state. Scutari is a city of rumours, and our arrival caused some sensation. Monastir had just fallen, and the columns of the Serbian Army were retreating through the snows of High Albania. Gruesome rumours as to their reception by the Albanian tribesmen filled the town. Our arrival at this juncture gave rise to the belief that we were the advance-party of an Anglo-French Army—well-informed persons said half a million strong—which was to take the Germans in flank from the Adriatic. That tall officer was the Commander-in-Chief, the favourite brother of Lord Kiönér. The cousin of the Kavass at the Italian Consulate had told some one that very morning at the Post Office that a fleet of 1000 aeroplanes had already landed at Medua, but an Austrian submarine had destroyed some of them. Small wonder, therefore, that we had the best rooms at the Scutari Hotel that night.

It may at once be explained that all these surmises were incorrect. The sole purpose of our Mission was to make arrangements for the feeding and supplying of the Serbian

Army, which it was then hoped would be able to maintain itself through the winter on the Serbian side of the Albanian Alps. The news which we received on our arrival made it clear that there was no chance of this being done, and that the Army itself would soon be upon us in Scutari. We further began to perceive that the Austrian submarines might constitute a complication of greater magnitude than had been anticipated. For the moment there was nothing to be done except telegraph to expedite the food-ships, and wait till the Serbians arrived.

We had about a week before they came, a happy week when the Bazaar was full of coffee and sugar and eggs and vegetables. We took over an Albanian house for our headquarters, and engaged an admirable Albanian cook. We bought a flock of turkeys and a number of fowls, and flour and rice and about a ton of onions, which afterwards when the famine began were our salvation. In the afternoons we would walk down to the Bazaar, and sit cross-legged on the floor of the shops, while the merchants gave us coffee and cigarettes, and sold us scarlet cloaks and embroidered waistcoats at exorbitant prices. We had plenty of gold Napoleons, which the merchants were delighted to get. A gold Napoleon was then worth about 30 paper perpers (Montenegrin francs). Two months later, just before the Austrian advance, you could

get 150 for it anywhere in the Bazaar; and the Serbian silver dinar (franco) and paper 10-franco note were worth about the same—2½d. or 3d. The Turkish money, which still circulates largely in Albania, maintained its exchange value with very little fluctuation throughout the Austrian campaign.

Towards the end of November the Serbians began to arrive. The retreat of an army can never be a satisfactory operation for the troops taking part in it, and its effects are not less demoralising because it is described as "strategic," or "*planmässig*," or "in consolidation of our positions." From the point when baggage has to be abandoned selfishness begins and discipline declines, and in proportion as the conditions approach those of the natural struggle for existence the process is accelerated. No retreating army can keep its morale. The Serbians in this retreat had come about as near exhaustion as an army can get. The column to which my servant Milivoj (of whom more later) belonged had no rations issued for the last six days before they reached Scutari. For weeks after he would pick up any stray piece of food he saw lying about, not because he was hungry, but from the same sort of instinct that makes some people save the string off parcels—"Never know when that may come in useful."

The Crown Prince made a state entry into Scutari at the head of his bodyguard, "*una cinquantina di cavalleria bellis-*

sima," in claret-coloured Hussar uniforms with blue trousers. This seemed a good move, and impressed the Scutarenese, who are accustomed from old Turkish times to bedraggled soldiery and brilliant High Commands, and no doubt base their impressions mainly on the latter. The General Staff arrived the day after. The first news we had of their arrival was the sudden appearance in our Mess of two distinguished British officers, hoarse, hungry, bearded and bootless, one in a naval and the other in a military uniform. One was Admiral Troubridge, commanding the British Naval Brigade in the Serbian Army. The other was Colonel Phillips, then Military Attaché in Serbia, but formerly Governor of Scutari in 1913, and a name to conjure with in that city.

Meanwhile with many delays, and a heavy toll of losses, due to the Austrian submarines, food supplies began to come over and did something to check the famine which had set in after Scutari had been stripped. England and France provided these supplies, but it was mainly Italian vessels which took the risk and paid the price of bringing them across the Adriatic. When one hears of "Italo-Serb antipathy," and the like, it is worth remembering, on the other side of the account, that the Serbian Army owes it in the first place to Italy that they were kept alive during these critical months. There was never much margin, how-

ever, until the Army reached Corfu.

In December Admiral Troubridge, at the request of the Serbian General Staff, took over the command of the Port of Medua. There was a pleasant incident when the Admiral rode into Medua at the head of the Naval Brigade, in their patched and ragged uniforms, mounted on the shaggy mountain ponies with which they had made the passage of the Albanian Alps. The Serbian officer commanding had collected some sixty Serbians, not less ragged than the Naval Brigade, given them each an extra piece of bread, and lined them up on either side of the road as a Guard of Honour. When the Admiral saw them he stopped in surprise, reined in his horse, and saluted them with the words: "*Pažame Bog junaci!*" ("God be with you heroes!") When a Serbian General reviews troops in peace time, it is the custom for him to greet them with the words, "*Pažame Bog voinici!*" ("God be with you soldiers!") In war, or as a special compliment, "*Voinici*" (soldiers) becomes "*Junaci*" (heroes). It was a long time since these men had stood on a parade-ground or heard this greeting. It brought back Serbia to them, and made them forget their sufferings.

Every day Austrian aeroplanes from Cattaro would fly over Scutari and Medua and drop bombs. The Montenegrin authorities used to telegraph to Scutari and Medua when

they appeared over Lovćen. Thereupon the Admiral used to hoist the Union Jack, and the men at work unloading the ships would run up the mountain side for cover. At Scutari the bells of the Cathedral were tolled for a warning. When the bells rang my Serbian servant, Milivoj, used to observe, "*Mili' Boga Catolici!*" ("the Catholics are praying to God!"). This was a pleasantry on Milivoj's part, as the Albanian Christians in Scutari are Catholics, while Milivoj, being Serbian, is Orthodox. It certainly never failed to elicit heated protest from our Albanian house-boys, one of whom understood a little Serb, as it was felt the remark implied that when an Orthodox prays to God he gets something better from the Almighty in the way of an answer than bombs.

In January rumours of the impending Montenegrin capitulation grew stronger, and we began to prepare for the inevitable retreat. The Serbian troops began to move southward, while the civilian refugees were shipped to Italy from Medua and Durazzo. Our Mission had by now been very much split up. Large detachments of A.S.C. had been landed at Durazzo and Valona, and a party of Engineers had been at work on the roads. The writer and one other officer were the only military members of the Mission left at Scutari at the last. When the news came that the Austrians were over the Lovćen, we held a

Council of War and decided to depart.

There are some houses one hates leaving. On the day before we left we divided what remained of our stores between the cook and the two house-boys. This somewhat relieved the prevailing gloom. Then for the last time we dined off onion pilaff, and sponge-cake of maize flour with *zabayone*. On the following morning we were up two hours before day-break, so as to start with the sun. My companion went off first, as he was travelling by a different route on a special mission of some danger. Then I saw my horses led out for the last time through the courtyard postern. The cook and the two boys kissed my hand, and the boys ran with me for a mile of my journey. There is a turn in the road which skirts the hill fort, from which the traveller has his last view of Scutari. The sun was newly up when I reached it. On the road one could clearly see the white fezzes and blue and scarlet cloaks of the Moham-medans going down to open their shops in the Bazaar. I said good-bye to the boys and turned my face away from the white minarets, the green gardens, and the blue lake. I felt like Boabdil, and I could not help remembering what Boabdil's wife said to him when he turned to take his last look on the distant Alhambra, "Cease to lament like a woman what you could not defend like a man."

I reached Medua about the

same time as the Corps Diplomatique from Cetinje. The last refugee boat was to leave that night, and the Admiral was engaged in finding room for 1000 in a space made to contain 500. I had my own designs in this detour to Medua. I made my way straight on to the boat and approached the steward. It was as I expected, and in exchange for four Napoleons I went away with a cask of forty kilos of red Apulian wine, somewhat watered, but good rough wine nevertheless. On the beach I found two smaller barrels which would be better for a pack-saddle, and my arrangements were complete. I had learnt from the Admiral that the Austrians had reached Duloigno that morning, and he was to leave himself that night in a destroyer as soon as he had got the refugee ship off. The sooner I could be off the better. I slept that night at the Franciscan Convent at Alessio, where I bade a warm farewell to the Frate in charge of the guest-room, who had been a good friend to our party, though I regret to say he used to pass on all he could learn about our doings through a certain channel to the Austrians. He was not, however, fitted by calling for espionage; and we soon found from certain counter-measures which we took that his information was extremely misleading. I am afraid that the things which we told him were not all of them true.

From Alessio the road to the south almost immediately enters a region of marsh. The marsh is traversed by a rough causeway of loose stones with many gaps. We were soon wedged in a Serbian column moving single file along this perilous track. There was no stopping or waiting to let others pass, the causeway was too narrow. If a man slipped off and fell into the marsh he would be able to clamber back, unless he fell in head first. But a horse could not get out again, and all along the way there were horses struggling for life in the morass, and slowly sinking deeper at each convulsion. Their cries were pitiful in the extreme. Nobody paid the least attention. When you cannot stop for a dying comrade you are not going to stop for a horse; and the Serbians had the infinitely worse experiences of their retreat through the mountains behind them. This is the sort of thing that is meant when one reads of retreats being "demoralising."

We entered the marshes about eight in the morning. It was two in the afternoon before we reached the end of them. We had been leading the pack-horses all the way; again and again they had stumbled and slipped, and we had held them up and dragged them on. By a crowning mercy none of our packs had slipped. Both horses and men were tired, but we were anxious to cross the river

Mati before dark, and we pushed on for another hour. Our Engineers had at one time got a ferry working for the passage of the river, but later the ferry broke down, and we and a good part of the army had to wade across. The water was cold, but did not reach waist-high. It was not, however, as may be imagined, in the nature of a tonic for hungry and tired troops, many of them wasted with dysentery, and between the Mati and Durazzo a good many died by the roadside. On the road by which I travelled (there were two lines of march) I passed eighteen such corpses.

It was about an hour before sundown when we reached the Ford. We camped on the other side, unloaded the horses, and set to work on cooking our meal. Except for a cup of coffee at starting, and an occasional army biscuit, we never ate during the day, though we stopped and fed the horses at least twice. But in the evening we made Homeric stews of onions, potatoes, rice, and bully-beef. I had also procured what was almost unprocurable at this time in Scutari—about a kilo of butter in a tin; and a little butter makes a great difference to a stew of this sort. There was practically no food to be bought anywhere along the road. Where the inhabitants were willing to sell an egg, they charged two or three francs for it. It was the same with bread. I took with

me thirty large loaves in two sacks, besides a tin of army biscuits, and these just lasted us into Valona. All travellers know the delight of supping by a camp fire beneath the stars. My Serb servants, Milivoj and Dragomir, used to cook the stew in a large pot. When it was ready, Dragomir would serve me with the pot sitting apart, while Milivoj drew wine for me from the barrel. When I had helped myself to my portion, they took the pot away and finished it. This was our nightly ritual; but after meat—i.e., as soon as I had finished my stew—I would join them at the camp fire, and we three would sit toasting bread and drinking coffee, and discussing all manner of subjects, till sleep came upon us. We did equal turns as sentry, and the sentries kept the fire going all night. At 4 we fed the horses, so as to start with or before the dawn. My two Serbians were very unlike each other. Milivoj was a peasant, with the strength of a giant and the heart of a child. All the art of travel was his. He could pack a pony, make a fire with damp fuel, and manage any animal better than any man I ever knew. When he first came to me he was very much exhausted by the rigours of the retreat—his uniform was in rags and his boots worn through. But then, just as much as later, when he was properly fed and looked after, he was always

willing and always cheerful. Dragomir, on the other hand, was a man of some education, who could write an official letter for me in Serb when occasion arose. He had been a mechanic in an automobile factory, and had travelled in Hungary. Besides Serb, he spoke Magyar and Roumanian. He had a brother who was a major in the army. He, too, was a worker, though not such a skilful one as Milivoj. He was also a talker; but his judgments were not half so shrewd as Milivoj's, though Milivoj could not read or write. But this, of course, is an old story. I used to make highly contentious remarks—such as "Serbia should be for the Serbians, and Albania for the Albanians." This proposition does not tally with the ambitions of all Serbians; and Dragi would burst out with a political speech. Milivoj would listen with his head on one side, and then he would say: "*Ja mislim taku, Gospodin Kapitan*" ("This is the way, I think, Gospodin Captain"), and then he would put the Yugoslav case in a far more convincing way than the writer has ever heard it from its protagonists in England. *O noctes cenaque deum!*

Four days after leaving the Mati we reached Durazzo, having had two more rivers to ford and two more nights to sleep in wet clothes. The bombing in Durazzo was very much worse than in Scutari, as Durazzo is a much more

compact town, and in the absence of anti-aircraft defences the Austrians were able to fly very low. A good deal of damage was done, and we were glad when the continued advance of the Austrians made it necessary for us to retreat farther south to Valona. I had made the journey from Scutari alone with my Serbians. For the next stage I joined forces with Honor, a brother officer. Honor has a unique knowledge of Southern Albania, having fought with the forces of Albanian Beys in previous years against both Greeks and Serbians. Besides English he speaks a kind of cosmopolitan language, which he has compounded of Albanian and Italian, which sounded to me grotesquely unlike Albanian as spoken by the natives, but which I found went down a great deal better than my own efforts, in what I flattered myself was a purer idiom—on the same principle, perhaps, that Indian servants are said to understand the Memsahib's Hindustani better than the Sahib's.

After leaving Durazzo we decided, in view of certain information which reached us, to make a detour to Berat, where we had reason to believe we should obtain useful intelligence as to the whereabouts of the Bulgars at this time, and other matters. After two days' travel, therefore, we left the route which the retreating Serbians were following and turned inland. Our appearance caused some surprise in

the region through which we were now passing, and we had to answer innumerable questions as to who we were and what was our business. Such questions need an answer, though it need not necessarily be a true one. Honor's method on these occasions is to say, not without *hauteur*, that he is the fruits of an illicit union of Sultan Abdul Hamid and the Queen of Greece, which impresses some and amuses others, and has the merit of giving away no information "likely to be of value to the enemy."

That we were able to make this journey unmolested was due entirely to the loyal support which throughout this period was given by Essad Pasha to the Allies. Essad is the head of a well-known Albanian family, who had established his power during the last few years over Central and Southern Albania. We were very much impressed by the length of his arm and the prestige of his name in the interior of Albania. In Durazzo his power was naturally overshadowed by the Italians, who were there in some force at the time. But in the *Hinterland* it was quite another story. We carried no recommendations from Essad, and were not accompanied by his gendarmes. Every one knew that the Austrians were advancing from the north (and many believed the Bulgars were also advancing from the east). The days when Essad's hand would still be able to reach the disobedient were numbered:

and in point of fact he took ship for Italy only a day or two later. Nevertheless, we found his gendarmerie actively carrying out his last orders. We saw two arrests made. And the mere knowledge that the Pasha was the friend of the Allies was sufficient to secure us and our hated Serbian servants a safe passage all along our road. And this though everywhere we heard the word "Komita" whispered, and several times we passed little knots of men with rifles going up into the mountains to join the Bulgar "Komitajis." If at the end of the war Essad were to land at Durazzo without a piastre in his pocket or a retainer at his back, it is the writer's belief that his arrival would at once constitute a political event of the first magnitude. Such is the prestige of his name and the terror of his record. Any attempts which may be made—by either side—at the end of this war to set up a non-national government in Albania are likely to make shipwreck, if this factor is left out of consideration.

The journey to Valona was less exacting than the journey to Durazzo. For one thing, while we were in Durazzo my Serbians had "found" me a tent. I asked what there was to pay, but they said there was nothing to pay; so I forbore to inquire further. "Find" is a word that ought to figure in all those vocabularies of military terms with which the young soldier provides himself at starting. The French

for "find" is *chipër*. In the second place, I had bought a new horse. Finally, there were native ferries on most of the rivers we had to cross, and we did not have to ford them. Eventually, one day at noon, we reached Fjeri, only one stage distant from the Voyusa. Fjeri boasts a restaurant, so we decided to unload the horses and indulge the long disused habit of lunch. While we were eating, a young Albanian on a good horse cantered up, and began to look right and left among the tables. Suddenly he caught sight of Honor, rushed up and kissed him on both cheeks. Honor said, "This is the brother of my blood-brother by the second wife," which still seemed to leave the situation obscure. When Honor was a filibuster in the Albanian mountains, he had sworn blood-brotherhood with a young Bey, according to the well-known Albanian custom, and had accordingly been adopted by the family. Greek troops had since then annexed the family property, burnt the castle, and divided up the land after their fashion amongst Greek settlers. The family were therefore in very reduced circumstances. They were living in a house lent them by a former tenant, and this boy was anxious to go to America to work. But whatever his misfortunes, an Albanian will never forgo the duty of hospitality, and it was now proposed that we should spend the night at their house. Honor and the boy cantered

ahead to prepare the family for the joyful news, and I and the servants came on later. The house was in a village at the top of a hill. We were met at the foot of the hill by the eldest son. At the top was old Bedri Bey with his family and the leading men of the village. I was led into a room with a bright log fire, and having removed my shoes was put in a place of honour next to the blaze. Then Honor and the family began to talk about old times, and I regret to say I dropped off to sleep. I was relieved to find, when I woke up two hours later, that my slumber was not regarded as an impoliteness but rather as an occasion for mirth. While I slept a sheep had been slain and roasted, and the roasted heart, kidneys, and other internal delicacies were now brought in on a platter by way of a whet, and toasted by us before the fire and eaten. They were shortly followed by the entire animal, and Bedri Bey severed and handed me the head, which is regarded as the most toothsome portion. The sheep was followed by a turkey, and the turkey by a huge bowl of pilaff, and the pilaff by something else. At last the sleeping-carpets were brought out, and we all turned over where we lay and slept till morning.

We left Bedri Bey all the sugar and tea we had (sugar had been at the rate of 3s. 6d. a lb. in Durazzo), and all our pots and pans except one, as the women had not been able

to carry much cooking gear away when the Greeks sacked the Castle. That day we reached the River Voyusa, and found lodging in a Han kept by an Epirote, who was doing a roaring trade by selling liquor and small necessities to the passing Serbs. We sent him down a present of a pint of our wine. There were now about 6 kilos left out of the 40 kilos which I had bought at Medua. As the men were about to pack the barrel on the following morning, I saw the landlord looking at it.

"Do you wish to buy?" I said.

"How much?"

"Two gold Napoleons and the barrel thrown in."

"Holy Joseph! It is not worth the half of a gold Napoleon."

"Go on packing," said I to Milivoj, who had put the barrel down while this conversation proceeded. The landlord went into the house.

"Pack the Little Pony first," said I to Milivoj; "I think he is going to buy."

At this moment the landlord came out. Seeing the barrel still on the ground, he paused.

"So you have found a purchaser for your wine?" he said.

"Accursed Serb," said I to Milivoj, "who told you to pack Little Pony? Will you never finish the cooking before you start washing the clothes?"

"Kapitan," said the land-

lord, "here are 2 Napoleons. Give me the wine."

Milivoj grinned.

"There are 6 good kilos here," said the landlord, rolling the barrel, "and there is no wine in the village. I will add spiritus (methylated spirits), and fill the barrel up with water; and the Serbian officers will give me a Napoleon a bottle for it."

So all parties were satisfied over this transaction.

Late that night we clattered into Valona, the frogs croaking by the roadside as we passed. It was very different travelling here. The Italians are in strength in Valona and

the *Hinterland* which they occupy, and the Austrians have made no serious attempt to penetrate this zone.

At Valona Milivoj and Dragomir rejoined their units, and left for Corfu. Valona seemed a tame and lonely place now, and the writer was glad shortly afterwards to be ordered to Rome, at which, after the usual *cache-cache* with a submarine, he arrived and so passes out of these pages.

In conclusion, let me say that Judson, Honor, Bedri Bey, are, for obvious reasons, not the real names of my friends.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW: THE STORY OF A CREATION.

I.

THE FORGING OF THE WEAPON.

MAJOR RAWDON'S heart glowed with indecent joy as he re-read the official cablegram that a dusty camel-orderly had just placed in his hands. It was seldom that such communications filled him with any pleasurable emotion; in fact, his official correspondence for the last year had been acrimonious rather than happy, but here at last had come the reward of patience—the patience that is needed to teach elementary wisdom to the professional politicians of Westminster when they are out of their own immediate depth of limited personal experience.

"In view of the altered circumstances of the situation," it ran, "you are hereby authorised to increase the present *personnel* of the Kafrin Camel Constabulary by four hundred men to be raised locally and at once. The necessary camels, rifles, saddlery, and equipment for this increase in numbers will be despatched you in due course, with additional officers (Military) to assist you.

(Signed)

H.M. SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR NOTHING IN PARTICULAR."

The African Protectorate of

Kafrin, ravaged, plundered, and incredibly raped by a dozen wild desert tribes who lived just outside the area of British administration, had, up to the receipt of this telegraphic communication, seemed unworthy of either protection or consideration by the flippanant bureaucrats of Parliament Square. What mattered it to them if that pestilential Political Officer, Major Rawdon, in the Interior, or his Civil Superiors at local Headquarters, kept reporting thousands of starving friendlies, a Protectorate death-rate that resembled a casualty list from Flanders, or the chronic ignominy that had resulted from a total British force of 150 native policemen having habitually to evade serious collision with the hordes that devastated the tortured land? Kafrin was not a *productive* Colony; on the contrary, it for ever needed "grants in aid" from the Imperial Exchequer, for if blood cannot be got from a stone, taxes cannot be wrung from sand and thorn-bushes. This being the case, argued the political wiseacres in the Party Press, why spend good money in protecting it at all? To the suggestions of both Colonial and Political Services that

Imperial honour, elementary humanity, and common decency all alike demanded vigorous action, they turned a deaf ear, and merely reiterated their dismal belief that a complete evacuation of the interior was the only sensible policy upon the eve of a General Election; and further, that even if 40 per cent of a race under the British flag *had* been exterminated within the last few years—well, it was probably their own fault!

Now, however, in their own words, the "situation" had "altered." It had altered because an intrepid young Civil Servant, burning with shame at having to call these emasculated cynics at home his fellow-countrymen, and embittered by the agony of the plundered countryside, had at last thrown official caution to the winds, chanced his career, and disobeyed his orders in an attempt to rescue with a handful of irregulars the stolen milch-camels of some friendlies from the clutches of the ever-raiding Dervish. Outnumbered by 20 to 1, he failed in his first intention, he lost his own life, and half of his force was cut to pieces; but in that glorious failure lay the germ of future triumph, for the foul circumstances that had necessitated his desperate action were for the first time laid bare to the general public. The startled man in the street learned with astonishment of a state of affairs, in a modern British Protectorate, such as he had hitherto connected only with the bad old days of the Belgian

Congo. Hence the Radical Government's grudging assent to strengthen and regularise the local police levies, and its orders to that effect as conveyed to the Political Officer upon the spot. Major Rawdon's "headquarters"—if such indeed they could be called by any stretch of the imagination—lay up country some 200 miles from the telegraph. They consisted of a much patched 80-pounder tent that contained his office, sleeping room, and Mess in one, and was full of miscellaneous tinned stores, a tame *cheetah* cub, and—as a rule—half a dozen gossiping "friendly" chieftains. The Major was not what you would call a tidy man, and books, rifles, and pots of jam covered his camp bed; while towels and shirts—at which the *cheetah* tore eternally—hung like flapping ghosts from the roof pole. The Political Officer had once been called a "professional irregular" by one who knew him. He adorned the Army list in a Territorial Regiment that never saw his presence, for from the age of nineteen onwards he had been exploring his Africa, first as a trooper against Oom Paul, then as a traveller in Rhodesia, and finally as a sort of handy man and Admirable Crichton on both sides of the Dark Continent. Kafran, for the purposes of this story, must have a vague geographical position; let us suppose that it is not far from Abyssinia, pretty close to Egypt, and a good long way from the Sahara. No, do not reach for your atlas, else from this very

lucid description you might guess its real name, and that would be unfair to the present historian. Major Rawdon filed the cablegram upon a rusty and broken toast-rack, smacked the *cheetah* oub gaily over the flank—to its intense annoyance—and being first and foremost a man of instant action, summoned the headmen of the friendly tribes from far and wide.

By the next evening most of them had arrived, galloping up on heavy crested stallions with saddles ablaze with simple barbaric finery and a handful of spears under their naked arms. They dismounted, and turning their sensible little ponies out to graze and look after themselves, they sought the presence of the solitary white man. The Major, although he loved every inch of the country and every trait of its unfortunate but gallant people, was no sentimentalist, and always hid his real feelings when dealing with them. Their failings as a race were many and complex, and included a boundless although very artless self-conceit, and any undue admiration or sympathy upon his part was likely to expose a weak side of his nature to them, of which, children-like, they would be the first to take advantage.

"See here," he said briefly, in their own court tongue, "the evil and oppression are now at an end. My Government has ordered me to raise, train, and arm four hundred more of your young men for the Camel Constabulary. They will receive free rations, uniform, and pay

every month, and every tribe among you, for whose safety they will be surety, should be represented."

"But what are four hundred of us, even when armed with Government rifles, against the Dervishes?" asked the local pessimist. "They number warriors by the thousand!"

"Hush, oh fool," replied the Major patiently, "we shall also be sent three or four machine-guns, and you have seen in the past how they eat up an enemy with a single cough. Also more white men will come—soldier officers—who will instruct your young men's ignorance."

"Ignorant we may be of the use of your new rifles," said another chief with naïve conceit, "or of how to march like your slow-moving soldiers at one command. But what do you white men know of the Dervishes or of our waterless country? I have seen many officers in the old days, and most of them perished miserably of thirst or from the spear, together with their men, both English and Indian. There was"—(and he mentioned two or three noteworthy British disasters)—"but the Dervishes still *are*!"

The Major smiled amiably. "Good," he replied; "and if indeed you need not our help, you need not have it!"

"Nay," interrupted a protesting chorus, "we only spoke of the *littleness* of that help, but a little is better than none. By Allah! we go to send you our young men;" and rising abruptly they galloped off

again desertwards in a score of different directions.

The process of enlisting the new Camel Corps was comparatively simple, save that there was an *embarrass de richesse* from which to select the tribal recruits. It is one thing, however, to raise 400 likely savages out of the Bush, and quite another to transform them into that very complex affair known as a regiment, or rather in this case a corps of Constabulary. This subtle distinction in nomenclature is very important by the way, for the Radicals had flatly refused to admit the necessity for any *military* force in the interior, and while supplying the new Camel Corps with the latest short rifle, four machine-guns, and the loan of half a score regular military officers, had salved their own lawyer-like consciences and bluffed their own hypocritical Press by *calling* the force a Civil Constabulary! The military officers in question duly arrived, but their combined efforts were severely tested to piece things together, and they worked from early morn to dewy eve at tasks not usually connected with H.M. commissioned ranks. The Kafrani, although by no means either stupid or lazy, seems constitutionally incapable of doing anything right; that, presumably, is why he is victimised by his more practical enemies. If musketry instruction was to be carried out, it was the British officer who had to supervise every detail, even

down to hammering out signalling discs and making and papering the targets with his own hands—tasks that in England or India could be left in safety to the discretion of the humblest lance-corporal. If a company tent was to be pitched or a pony to be watered, the British officer usually found it simpler to do it himself rather than trust to his native sergeant or orderly, who, if left to their own devices, would probably manage to tear the one and lose the other. Of trained veterinary staff there was none, and so the adaptable British subaltern had to learn all the fleshly ills to which that most heart-breaking of beasts, the thoroughbred riding camel, is heir; and armed with lancet, probe, and permanganate of potash, the overworked officers toiled early and late at obscure diseases or loathsome sores under the burning rays of a fly-hatching African sun. When neither carpentering nor veterinary work claimed their immediate attention, they devoted themselves to squatting upon the sand and stamping with the corps number and the Government broad arrow 400 camel saddles, 400 rifles, 400 jerseys, 400 pairs of shorts, 400 bayonets, 400 bayonet scabbards, 400 pairs of puttees, and 400 of all that can be loosed from an Aldershot ordnance store or Bombay clothing factory. That, and much more, accomplished, they wrote out their pay accounts and the long lists of their men's names therein, with every penny of credit and debit due;

for the clerical staff consisted of but one aged Arab clerk, who perpetually poisoned himself with American patent drugs, and so was, generally speaking, useless. Then they took their turn at ration and ammunition fatigues, swinging great sacks of dates and rice or bulky boxes of cartridges upon their shoulders off the newly arrived camel caravans; for without some such practical lead upon the part of his white officer the Kafirani will not work cheerfully, being a born democrat and a firm believer in human equality. After mopping their brows—and in their really leisure moments—the subalterns accomplished what as soldiers they were primarily in the country for—namely, the military training of their men. Half a dozen efficient Arab or Indian subordinate clerks, carpenters, and veterinary assistants could have saved much precious time, have done the menial side of such varied technical labours much better, and so have enabled the officers to devote their undivided attention to pressing problems that were purely military; but the employment of such technically informed subordinates would have cost the British taxpayer perhaps £10 or £20 a month extra, and so, penny wise and pound foolish, the home Government wasted the time and exhausted the tempers of the officers whose services they had borrowed from the War Office, to the delaying of the military evolution of the

corps considered simply as a fighting unit.

Meanwhile the hungry friendlies fared well in the neighbourhood of the Camel Corps; for were there not pickings of grain to be gleaned after “stables,” when the camels had been fed and had stupidly spilt some of their *gram* ration? And half a handful of saliva-soiled corn may keep together the body and soul of many a starving woman or child. The new officers, fresh to the famished Protectorate, and not as yet possessing the tired fatalism of the African Major, were horrified at a state of affairs that was equally responsible for sleek well-fed camels and for starving human beings, who followed the beasts like famished carrion-crows, and who even searched the camel-dung fires at night for undigested grain. Discovering that no action of theirs could possibly induce Westminster—for all its hypocritical pomposities and critical mistrust of its fellow-countrymen abroad—to relieve the famished and nomadic population, whose former wealth had lain in its now ravished camels and cattle, many of the officers put their hands into their own pockets to alleviate the hideous want. But what could a dozen officials do in a field of destitution so wide that even H.M. Ministers refused to enter it?

“My God!” cried young Lacey of the Coldstreams one night, after discovering yet another dead body close to

his tent, with its shrivelled skin as usual broken by its protruding ribs. "I'd never have believed that this could happen in a British Protectorate. 'Protectorate,' indeed! Teach us not to crow too much in future over French or Belgian weak points in colonisation! All the same, if the British *public* realised the state of affairs out here, they'd not stand it another month; and that fluffy-faced, high-collared shop-walker" (and here he blasphemously named an ex-Secretary of State for Nothing in Particular on the Liberal side) "would be lynched by his own beastly constituents!"

"Quite so!" agreed the Major wearily; "but you see the advantage of a truly Democratic Government is that it is always so occupied in preaching to the People about their rights and wrongs, that it has no time to mention their duties."

"But, rotting apart, the matter's positively scandalous!" cried Lacey.

"So's the Government," replied the Major laconically as he re-lit his much-charred pipe.

"Damn it!" cried the Subaltern again, "but I'll write to my grandfather, Lord Had-enough; the Radicals are always ragging him about his tenants' cottages. The Cockney politician seems to imagine that the East Anglican agricultural labourer wants a bath and a telephone in every bedroom. He's big enough to raise

a row about the Radical Government's methods of treating *their* tenants out here. Put it that way!"

"No good," jerked the Major; "only get him accused of party bias and political blackmail. Political stunts are *all* dirt, no matter which side they come from. As adults who have seen a bit of life, you and I don't want to copy the methods of the children at home—Cockney or bumpkin—in their grimy quarrels. The matter's too serious when it comes to half a race dying of starvation or being massacred. No; all *we've* got to do is to hold our tongues, lie low, keep on saying nothing, and raise a camel corps fit to knock spots out of the Dervishes. When we've put the fear of God into *them*, the wily Kafirani will get along all right without any reference to the mischievous monkey-house at home."

"Yes"—and the Subaltern smiled bitterly—"and then go back to England and get *patronised* by the beasts! 'Haw, jolly fascinating country Kafirani, I suppose? Haw, been some fighting there, I believe? Dear me, what *shall* I say next to this stupid bucolic soldier?' I see them, the long-haired skunks! the only brainy ones among 'em are the German Jews, and *they're* crooked," and the Subaltern swore.

"Time's up," said the Major patiently, looking at his watch and finishing his tepid peg—it

was at supper that the conversation occurred. "I must go the rounds and see if *any* of my young sentries know their orders. Always supposing," he added darkly, "that they've condescended to remain at their posts at all. I say, Lacey, if you've time after cleaning your machine-guns and finishing off that map, you might give me a hand a bit later at clearing out the wells. The water is shrinking daily, but if we clean out some of the sand and rubbish, we ought to be able to stay here another ten days until our musketry is over. Then we can trek on to Buroli until *that* runs dry, and after that—the Deluge!"

The water at length gave out and the embryo Camel Corps straggled slowly forward some forty miles in the direction of the Dervish frontier, where more water was to be obtained. As yet their appearance could scarcely be called strictly martial, and as, in default of transport, every man carried his worldly necessities for the next three months upon his saddle-bow, the crawling procession resembled the exodus from Egypt rather than a British unit upon the march.

Buroli reached, tents were pitched, brushwood wigwams erected, ration stands arranged, wells re-dug, and thorn zaribas constructed, until some sort of order was arrived at, and the *Community*—for it was not as yet a *Corps*—began to settle down, to drill and manœuvre

in deadly earnest. But here a difficulty arose: the training of a camel *company* is fully legislated for in a small yellow-covered drill manual—(that very wisely warns its readers that the temper of the camel is "peculiar")—and is simplicity itself. Possibly the remarks may apply to a whole Camel Corps when manœuvring upon the open sands of Egypt, but in the case of the Kafiranis, who had often to force their way through the thorniest of bush, the problem of Regimental Drill became a problem. *How* were the three companies to manœuvre together upon parade in united cohesion? As a Cavalry Regiment or as an Infantry Battalion? At first sight it would appear that cavalry methods were indicated, until a trial of these swiftly revealed the fact that, on account of the idiosyncrasies of the camel, certain formations and paces that are suitable for horses merely resulted in wholesale collision and chaos when adopted by the distracted Constabulary.

Then Infantry methods were tried, but as the camel can neither "form fours" nor "about turn," these had to be amended, until at last some hideously unprofessional compromise was arrived at, in which every word of command known to the three arms of the British army—and some that are not—were ruthlessly employed if any hope of immediate succour lay in their pronouncement. Three main formations were finally evolved that seemed to legislate for all the

changes and chances of this mortal life, namely:—

"Form Square!"

"Form Lumps!"

"Form Column of Lumps!"

The last two commands dealt respectively with increasing or decreasing "front"; the unit named in them being left—as regards its size—to the immediate discretion of the Kafirani mind in moments of excitement. After all, the Camel Constables were no precisians!

It must not, however, be imagined that these six or eight months of strenuous preparation to take the field passed as smoothly as might be imagined by the tepid description in these hastily written pages. Half-way through the training the *Sheerif* arose, a hot howling hurricane of roaring sand that blew without ceasing for three long and stricken months, levelling all tents, blinding both man and beast with a worse than ophthalmia, mischievously tearing every file and document from the ruined office tent, and whirling weeks of tedious drudgery into the back of the farthest beyond.

Even the nerves of the natives suffered; the animals shrunk into mere withered mummies, and the overstrained white men grew irritable and peevish. Personal friction became acute; and beyond all that arose a wild unbalanced hatred of the bureaucrats in London, a feeling that was not allayed by the orders, counter-orders, and disorders for which they were mainly responsible.

Now it was a new pony company of M.I. that was to be raised "at once if not sooner," as the Junior Subaltern put it; or again, when the pony saddles arrived, it was discovered they were *minus* their girths, and as likely as not their stirrup-irons as well. This state of constant confusion was of course the direct result of a Civilian Department in Whitehall being compelled by political exigencies to legislate for requirements that were purely military. For the Camel Constabulary was first and foremost a military force, despite its deliberately misleading name, which merely rendered it a veritable wolf in sheep's clothing!

Meanwhile the Dervishes were not altogether idle, and although there was now but little left to loot in the naked protectorate, an occasional dash was made into British territory out of mere impudence and braggadocio; and this, of course, necessitated the splitting up of the half-trained corps, in order to make some show of protest, in all directions. Once the enemy actually succeeded in reaching and firing into the Chief Commissioner's permanent headquarters down country, and returning by a circuitous route avoided the collision that the Constabulary were seeking, but sought in vain. Again, internecine warfare would suddenly blaze up between the friendly tribes themselves, who, hungry and desperate, saw no more danger in braving Government's displeasure by cattle-lifting from

their more fortunate neighbours than in passively starving without a struggle for life.

In fact, taking the general situation all round, as a complex whole it was as fair an imitation of hell upon earth as could be experienced in the twentieth century by a dozen pioneers of civilisation. The last straw came with the locusts, who stripped the Bush of every green thing that was fit for the grazing of the Camel Corps or for the herds of the people. But why pile on the agony? Suffice it to say that at this juncture the most popular member of the community elected to die. He died of no known complaint;

it was simply *Kafirantis*, which is an utter leaden weariness of soul and body and brain.

However, where there's a will there's a way, and despite lack of water, the idiocy of civil contractors, interference from all sides, and the obstruction of locusts, Dervishes, and Members of Parliament, the Constabulary at length "found itself," and at last appeared upon parade intact, as smart as paint, able to shoot straight up to 400 yards, ready to lick creation at scouting, and exceedingly proficient in the very difficult art of doing without a drink when necessary in a barren and dry land where no water is.

II.

THE WEAPON IN USE.

All this happened just before the great European War; and it is a further proof of the evil star of Kafir that, contingent upon the Civil Camel Constabulary becoming fit to take the field, the Protectorate had at last been promised real live military assistance as well, both in the form of Indian reinforcements and naval aerial units. Naval officers indeed actually arrived, were entertained by Major Rawdon, and noted local conditions as they affected aeronautics. The newspapers talked loudly of the interesting project, and then — Germany suddenly threw down her challenge to Europe!

When the citadel itself is threatened the outpost must

fain shift for itself, so the situation in Kafir remained unavoidably unchanged. Nothing daunted, the recently appointed military Commander, who had just arrived in the Protectorate, determined that even with so small a force at his disposal — namely, an Indian Contingent and the now efficient, even if irregular, Camel Constabulary — he would be able to safeguard the friendlies from what had been for years an intolerable persecution and an Imperial dishonour. He had no intention, however, of confining his protection of the country to a policy of mere passive defence, which strategy when dealing with a savage enemy is merely to prostitute your prestige; on

the contrary, he determined to startle the arrogant Dervish by a vigorous and immediate offensive of his own conceiving. As a rule, the Dervish of this part of Africa offers a British force no concrete objective in the shape of walled cities or field armies, because he is a nomad, here to-day, there to-morrow, and only to be found *en masse* when he temporarily mobilises for raid, murder, and rape. In this case the enemy, ever bold through years of unchallenged success, had actually seized a certain mountain ridge well inside British territory itself; and upon this site, which was called Ainageisha, had insolently erected half a dozen solidly built stone fortresses. From this pivot of manoeuvre the Dervishes were in a position to dominate the fairest grazing areas of the whole countryside, which in reality belonged to our friendlies, but to which they were now forbidden all access. The plan did credit to the marauders' perspicacity, because for over a year this enemy stronghold in their midst had lowered British prestige in the eyes of the friendly tribes, and had proved a veritable robbers' cave, through which had poured half the resources of the pirated countryside.

It was against this plague spot upon the British red of the African map that the officer commanding the troops now in the Protectorate—and whom for future reference we will call the "O.C. Troops"—determined to strike his first blow. The proposition, how-

ever, was not as simple as it seems upon paper, and at best could only be regarded in the light of an experimental measure that should at least clear up some of his doubts as to the number, dispositions, and fighting qualities of the enemy, regarding which he was at present entirely in the dark. Further, between him and his objective lay a ninety-mile wide barrier of waterless wilderness, which, although easily negotiable by the Camel Corps in two marches, would mean at least a four days' hot and harassing trek for his slower-moving Indian infantry. Double these figures in each case to allow for a return journey, and two more clear days for the anticipated fighting upon arrival, and you will realise that the O.C. Troops had to carry Indian rations for at least ten days and Kafirani rations (which are on a lighter scale) for six. As regards the question of water, he would have to carry enough for four days in the case of the infantry and their transport animals; but the camelry would temporarily look after themselves, and more would be available near Ainageisha.

Now water for a big force is the most bulky, the most heavy, and the most difficult of all supplies to transport without loss or leakage, and at least 20 per cent more than is actually required upon paper must be carried, or your men will most certainly go thirsty; but making the best of a bad job, the O.C. Troops pushed his force out upon the warpath,

and placing his trust in God for subsequent developments, struck out towards the mirage-haunted horizon ahead.

This forced march was carried out smoothly, and the fortress in the hills reached without incident. The defences, however, were now found to be so strong that it was quite impossible to storm them without the help of artillery, of which the force had none. Thrice, dismounted attacks were hurled at the stronghold by the Camel Corps, but all were bloodily repulsed, although some local successes were gained. One British officer was killed in the very gateway, two more were wounded close to him, and then the O.C. Troops (whose British officers were few, invaluable, and irreplaceable) reluctantly broke off the engagement and retired into bivouac. Then he suddenly remembered the existence of an aged piece of ordnance at Buroli, a cannon that legend narrated had been used thirty-five years ago in the Afghan war of '79, and which had since drifted to Africa for the purpose—presumably—of firing midday salutes with blank cartridge. He at once despatched two camel-orderlies to the officer left in command of his advanced base, and demanded the immediate despatch of this interesting antique, together with what ammunition could be unearthed in order to feed it. Reinforced by this link with ancient history, which threw a shell that weighed nearly six pounds, he resumed his attack

with vigour, and a few of the outlying defences fell into his hands. Lack of gun-cotton prevented the complete destruction of the walls, some of which were ten feet thick and twenty feet high, and since every hour that he tarried upon the scene ate into his ration sheets, he was obliged to return to Buroli, still leaving the enemy in possession of the vicinity, despite their temporary expulsion from the outlying forts. Their main citadel remained intact during this fighting.

However, the adventure was fraught with excellent results, because the enemy learned with pained surprise that the initiative had at last passed into British hands; and further, that the despised friendlies were, when stiffened by discipline and self-respect, more than able to hold their own against their former persecutors.

Upon their return from these operations, the camels all collectively elected to contract anæmic mange, and were accordingly painted from nose to tail with a nauseous mixture of tar and soft-soap that was the ingenious invention of some local scout of science. This accomplished, the foolish-looking and now soot-coloured beasts had to be carefully wet-nursed and shaded from the sun, otherwise the sticky ointment boiled in the mid-day heat scalded their mangy humps. The worst cases were sent back a day's march for a change of grazing

and a course of salt-licks, just as old gentlemen are sent to Homburg or Harrogate for a course of the waters, while the remainder took their chances of recovery at Buroli, since at any moment they might be required in an emergency. Lacey and his *confrères* fumed with rage over this last maddening *contretemps*, but Major Rawdon, with his usual cheerful pessimism, merely regarded the incident as being in the usual African day's work, and mentally resolved to apply for a camel reserve, since his animals apparently became casualties more rapidly than his men. His own sure-footed Arab, with its well-bred high-domed forehead, firm solid hump, and clean lathy muscular legs, remained immune from the disease, and carried him backwards and forwards daily between the camp and the camel "hospital" in rear.

At Buroli itself nothing could be done for the moment, except carry out "artillery practice" with the midday gun: a form of amusement that contributed to the gaiety of the camp, if for no other reason than that the projectile it discharged used to slide slowly down the barrel and drop out helplessly upon the ground if the muzzle were depressed unduly in an attempt to fire down a steep incline. The breaches that this formidable weapon made in the Dervish forts had been conscientiously recorded in photography by an enthusiastic ex-gunner of the Indian Contingent, who,

stripped to the waist, with a bag of gunpowder and a medieval artillery sponge, had fought his battery at eighty yards' range from the enemy, like some character out of the battle of the Nile. It was, in fact, suggested to him that he ought to possess a tarred pig-tail. The effect upon the forts, as shown by his snapshots, rather resembled the cracks that a cricket-ball might make if hurled with considerable violence against a stucco-plastered brick wall—superficial but full of starred scenic effects.

Profiting by experience, the O.C. Troops now applied for high explosives and hand-grenades with which to storm and demolish the forts after he should have renewed his attack upon them. It was during the interval that elapsed between his application and the reply to it that the Dervishes brought off a mildly successful leg-pull, that resulted in the hurried despatch of a force of Camelry to relieve an Indian block-house that was in entirely imaginary difficulties, a hundred odd miles away, across an unmapped maze of shimmering hills and blazing desert. Upon arrival, the gallant relief force was firstly mistaken by their friends for a party of raiding Dervishes and nearly "dirty tricked" in consequence; and secondly, treated to much ribald laughter over the plight of their sweating and sore-backed beasts, which had been bucketed hard for two nights and a day. Their host, however, being a son of Scotia and the night

none other than New Year's Eve, they were more than hospitably treated before returning to Buroli.

Finally, all was ready for the next blow against Aina-geisha, and a total commando a little short of six hundred men, plus *two* "midday" guns and a party of Pioneers with enough explosives to shake the universe, set out upon this new adventure. As the long dusty column swung across the moonlit bush it chanced to pass close to the spot where the young Civilian's force had been cut to pieces. Little remained to mark the site of this tragic battlefield, for the hyenas or the lions had long since dragged the glistening skeletons far and wide; but 500 dead Dervishes and some 40 heroes of the old Constabulary lay about the avenging column's path, and doubtless the spirits of both friend and foe alike were well aware of what was in the wind that night. Not being soldiers of the orthodox novellette variety, the subalterns of the Camel Corps did not "reverently doff their head-dress in the presence of the gallant dead"; but the second in command, an old African, who had been the young Civilian's associate and friend, betted apologetically, and with foul oath at his stumbling camel, that "*he*"—nodding his head away from the line of march—"would have liked to have been out on this God-forsaken stunt, and so have got a bit of his own back on Brother Dervish!"

Dawn flared up again in the eastern sky, and the seemingly endless trek continued, until finally the tired jolt, jolt, jolt of the flagging camels turned into the sea-sick sway of their heaving walk, and a halt was called before the fight that was now imminent. The Dervishes soon evacuated the same outlying forts that they had previously deserted, and these were now speedily blown heavenwards, the Pioneers working feverishly under a brisk sniping fire from the enemies' main positions. The Dervishes, under long-range fire from the Constabulary's machine-guns, hurriedly retired over the skyline and occupied a rocky gorge, at the top of which lay the final *keep* of their natural citadel and their water-supply as well. This *keep* consisted of a tall two-decker fort, loopholed on both floors, bomb-proof as to its massive stone walls, and capable of holding about one hundred sharpshooters. At the foot of the gorge lay two smaller stone forts that blocked its narrow mouth like corks in a bottle neck. Both sides of this crooked ravine, from its entrance right up to the main Dervish fort, were honeycombed with roomy caves and overhanging galleries that sheltered hundreds of their best marksmen, who, armed with heavy-bore rifles, were in an ideal position to enfilade from both flanks simultaneously any force advancing up the gorge. The average width of the gorge was perhaps some 400 yards in extent, and the

distance between its mouth and the two-decker fort at the top about half a mile.

To gain this wasp's nest of a position, the Dervishes had slid down a precipitous cliff where no mounted troops could possibly follow; in consequence the mixed British force was obliged to make a counter-march round the base of the mountains, and arrived in position opposite the mouth of the gorge at noon upon the following day.

This fourth fight for local supremacy lasted until dusk, and went entirely in favour of the British. Slowly, step by step and rock by rock, they drove the enemy back up the sun-smitten ravine and methodically hunted them out of their caves and forts with machine-guns, hand-grenades, and bayonets. The "midday" guns added to the spectacular panoply of war, tossing their baby shells upon the roof of the final keep, and the pioneers finished the good work by mining the foundations of this last rallying point of the now defeated foemen. Not a Dervish demanded quarter, and not a Kafirani would have given it him if he had, for there were old arrears of hideous wrong and untold tyranny to be avenged that were outside the ken even of their own British officers. At length, amid wild cheers on the part of the Camel Corps and the Indian Sepoys, the last of the Dervish garrison vanished sky-high in a rumbling explosion that blew the main fortress

into smithereens; and the victors, after hurriedly securing the water-supply, turned back to collect their scattered wounded behind, who were still being sniped by a few survivors in the caves. Thus in the course of the afternoon many hundred square miles of good grazing land, that was as yet untouched by locusts, was automatically restored to its rightful owners by the fall of Ainageisha. More than this, the fighting qualities and discipline of the Camel Constabulary were then and there proved, and recorded in the words of the official despatch, which stated briefly that, for the first time in their history, the Kafirani friendlies had "carried out a sustained tactical offensive" with entire and unqualified success. In fact, it was a moral as well as a material victory for the men who were primarily responsible for the raising and training of the local levies, whose martial qualities had long since been ignored or even disparaged by those with a superficial knowledge of their character, national genius, and past misfortunes. It was also a victory for the dead Civilian, who had been the indirect cause of bringing matters to an honest crisis. He had sown the seed of his own life in the soil of a lonely grave, and from that precious seed had sprung a white flowering blossom—the Salvation of those for whom he had died.

In the usual whirligig of African activities Major Rawdon was not in at the finish

to witness the justification of his faith in his beloved people, nor to share the reward of the sweating subalterns who had borne with him the heat and burden of the day. Previous to the second phase of these operations he had been transferred to yet another part of Africa even more remote than Kafirán, to combat the honey-tongued Hun in a neutral and independent native African State. We may believe that the apostles of *Kultur* found him a not unworthy foeman in diplomacy after his experience in dealing with the Nothing in Particular Office!

Since these events took place there has been a change of Secretaries of State, and the Kafirán Camel Constabulary have been further regularised, and are now, at last, so the present historian has heard, openly recognised as a military force. Further, the whole position in the Protectorate has been consolidated, and the land, although by no means a health resort, can at least call its soul its own. How long

this comparatively happy state of affairs will last none can say, for the fate of Kafirán rests solely upon the whim of so-called Democratic party politics, which are even more unstable and far less honest than the promises of medieval princes. Still let us hope for the best, and trust that the fall of Ainageisha will not be the last blow struck at the Dervishes so long as they continue to occupy British territory.

For the rest, let us congratulate the present Camel Corps upon its professional recognition by the rest of an Empire in arms, and let us ponder the words of young Lacey after the defeat of the Dervishes, and when his own raw company had been tried and proven—

"Moses got blanked uppish about making bricks without straw," he remarked happily in the bivouac after the affray, "but, hang it all, there's no *mud* even in this confounded sand heap!"

ZERES.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT—MR ASQUITH NO LONGER INDISPENSABLE—BUT STILL “LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY”—HERR VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG’S SPEECH—A TRICK TO FOOL THE NEUTRALS—“THE PRECIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS OF HUMANITY”—NO TREATY WITH DISHONOURED FOES—THE CRIMES OF GERMANY—THE NATIONAL GALLERY—THE PROPOSAL OF THE TRUSTEES—THE DANGER OF BROKEN FAITH AND SHIFTING TASTE.

AT last the Democracy has spoken, and with all the more clarity and force, because it has not spoken through its futile ballot-boxes. In vain the discomfited Radicals talk of intrigues and conspiracies. It is no conspiracy in which the whole people is engaged, and you may travel from one end of the country to the other without hearing a word of regret from independent citizens. That the wire-pullers of a beaten faction should mean over their losses and prefer vague charges of underhand dealing is only natural. We need pay no attention to their poor attempts at consolation. We have at last a National Government, which knows no other ambition than to carry on the war with vigour and foresight, and for the first time since the war began we have a right to look towards the future with the confidence begot of a settled policy and a determination to win.

A few short months ago Mr Asquith seemed to have realised the first and last hope of the Whig: he was, he thought, tenant for life. The expedient of prolonging the term of his office by six months now and again was simple

and easy. The challenge, frequently thrown down in the House of Commons, “If you don’t approve of what we do, turn us out,” was not picked up, for very obvious reasons. The country was purposely left without a voice by those who believe most piously in the doctrine of democratic control. All the common risks of political life were carefully provided against. And then came the sudden expression of the nation’s will, that no longer would it tolerate the shifts and hesitations which for many months had hampered us in the prosecution of the war. In vain would Mr Lloyd George have threatened resignation; in vain would Lord Derby and Mr Bonar Law have offered their support,—if they had not known that the country was behind them, eager to do its utmost to ensure victory, and ready to take upon its back the heaviest burden of sacrifice. Mr Asquith has fallen not a victim to Mr Lloyd George’s ambition, but to the country’s resolve that henceforth no consideration of sentiment, no ingrained habit of politics, should come between it and the defeat of its enemies.

We welcome the new Govern-

ment, therefore, because we believe that it gives us a sound guarantee of victory. It is national, in the best sense. It includes within its compass men of all parties and some men of no party at all. It has not been put together upon the peace-plan of accommodation. It is something far better than a way to pay old debts or to knit new and useful friendships. Its members have been chosen for no other reason than their essential fitness to serve their country. Surely the change, which admits the return to high influence of Lord Milner and Sir Edward Carson, needs no word of praise. And while we have faith that Mr Lloyd George will provide the force which is necessary to inspire his colleagues and to insure the confidence of the people, he will not, he cannot, make any attempt to convert all those who work with him into likenesses of himself. That is not his temperament, and he knows that he is dealing with men who will remain true to their own characters and ambitions. Now, Mr Asquith was trained in cynicism. He affected always not to care what happened. His maxim, "wait and see," his one contribution to political philosophy, was dangerous, because it was sincere. He did wait and see—he wanted all others to wait and see; and he inoculated every fresh fly that walked into his spider's parlour with his own indecision and love of inactivity. His Cabinet became a mere collection of twenty-three Mr Asquiths.

But men can be the colleagues of Mr Lloyd George, we believe, and retain their own force, their own energy. And it is the chief merit of the new Cabinet that it possesses all the efficiency which comes of independent thought, animated by a common will to win the war.

That indeed, to win the war, is the Cabinet's sole call and duty. If it do not answer the call, if it shirks the duty, it will follow other Cabinets into limbo. It does not exist to illustrate a theory of politics or to help the careers of its members. Designed for one purpose only, it is free from the mystery which hung about its predecessor. Mr Asquith and his friends held office not for the country, but for themselves. So long as they retained their places, they reeked not of efficiency; and we were obliged to believe in "the unseen hand," because nothing else could explain the sentimental kindness wherewith our rulers treated their adversaries. But there is at last an end of folly. We look forward to a policy of "thorough." The Ministers and the country are alive, none too soon, to the simple truth that we are at war: that the Germans are our enemies, who must be met on their own terms, fought with their own weapons, threatened, whenever it be necessary, with reprisals, blockaded with all the severity of which our triumphant Navy is capable, and assailed by land and sea, until defeat,

sure and complete, overtakes them.

And the change of Government has brought to the country a great sense of relief, because it has destroyed utterly the pompous myth of indispensability we heard on every hand. We were told frequently by the gentleman himself, that Mr Asquith was indispensable. He kept the great middle-class in his pocket, said one. He alone, suggested another, ensured the unity of the nation. His cleverness exceeded all that was ever known to the poor race of men, and if cleverness consists in holding on inactively to office, then in cleverness he has few rivals. But he is indispensable no longer—that is evident; for he has retired from office, and the sky has not fallen. And more than that: we are saved from the shame of confessing that one man only stood between the British Empire and destruction. We are not so poverty-stricken that we depend for our existence upon Mr Asquith's will. Of course, we have always been conscious of this simple fact, and yet on every side we have heard the false echo of indispensability. When we doubted whether Mr Asquith and his colleagues were the sole repositories of wisdom left to our country, we were countered always with the foolish question: "But whom would you put in their place?" The question was irrelevant as well as foolish, because it is useless to attempt to fill a place before it is vacated. Even when Newcastle was at last deposed, there were few who

knew for a certainty that Pitt would succeed him in the conduct of the war. But it is evident now, as it should have been evident all along, that England has no lack of men, and when we compare the colleagues of Mr Asquith with those whom we have put in their places, we echo the sigh of universal relief which has gone up from every corner of the Empire, and lament only that the democracy had not lifted up its voice in protest long ago.

You cannot govern a country in time of war by the methods that appear profitable in time of peace. And Mr Asquith was still in his own eyes the first of parliamentarians. It may be that, like Sir Robert Peel, he played on the House of Commons as on an old fiddle. But, with Germany confronting us east and west in Europe, Houses of Commons and old fiddles are alike nugatory. We asked to be trusted, and the late Government did its best to conciliate us with apologies. We demanded vigorous action and a settled policy, and Mr Asquith did nothing until he was forced to do it by pressure from outside. He complains now that the journals have conspired against him. And had it not been that he took ultimately the advice which the journals proffered him, we should by this time be lying prone under the heel of Germany. True to the first and last article of his faith—"wait and see"—he put off doing what he should have known was necessary always to the

last moment. For many a weary month he stood in the way of conscription, saying that if it were introduced it would be introduced by another Prime Minister than himself, and then whittled it down until it lost more than half its effect. Indeed, the immediate cause of his retirement was a constitutional inability to consider the proper adjustment of man-power. He was still content to wait upon events, and had he had his way, he would have lingered on until the spring without making a whole-hearted attempt to find the men who are necessary for victory.

It might be said, it has been said, that since the change has been made, we need not cast a look behind us to the past. Mr Asquith and Viscount Grey have rendered silence impossible. The speeches which they delivered at the Reform Club after their resignation require some sort of an answer, because they show that these two leaders of the Radical party have not understood, even dimly, the problem which confronted them. What they said might have been heard calmly and complacently had a reform bill or a budget been under discussion. It seems wholly irrelevant at a moment when the British Empire is fighting for its life. Mr Asquith complains that something was said in a newspaper which should not have been said, and hints that had there been no indiscretion committed, reconstruction was still possible. He forgets that all

these details are wholly unimportant. The one question, put before us all, was defeat or victory. Shall we wait and see until defeat overtakes us, or shall we go forth hopefully to meet the victory which will be the reward of vigour and courage? When he speaks of "a well-organised, carefully engineered conspiracy," he is throwing dust in the people's eyes. He knows well enough that nothing but a universal pressure would have excluded him and his friends from office, and even he must be convinced by the unanimity of approval, here and in the Dominions, that his place would have been untenable even had Mr Lloyd George and Lord Derby not spoken a word. After all, a *coup d'état* cannot be made by leading articles.

However, Mr Asquith is impenitent. He still believes that the breaking up of his Cabinet was "a national calamity," and at the same time "hopes that it will be for the best," though he does not explain why his departure is a national calamity, or how in any circumstances a national calamity can be for the best. At the same time, both he and Viscount Grey are quite easy in their minds concerning the view which posterity will take of their actions. They would have us know that they have always kept an eye upon history. And sometimes we have thought that they adopted as their own Bubb Dodington's motto: "All for quarter day!" But to anticipate the verdict of history is not easy. We

must condemn or applaud our statesmen as we find them, and truly there are very few to-day, outside the pious tabernacles of Liberalism, who are not assured that the sacrifice of Mr Asquith and his friends was essential to the safety of the Empire.

In this stern crisis of our fate, moreover, the career of this or that statesman is wholly unimportant. We are fighting for a far larger issue than the political triumph of a Prime Minister. We are fighting not merely that our country, but that civilisation, may survive. In comparison with this end and purpose how small are the fates of men and Governments! Mr Asquith lays great stress upon the fact that he remains the leader of the Liberal party. He clings to this barren honour as a man in a fire might cling to an old coat. What is the Liberal party, and where is it? We thought that in this great war of peoples and ideals we had rid ourselves of parties. Obviously we were wrong. The Liberal party still exists, and Mr Asquith is its trusted leader. Twice has he received the august title in the House of Commons, and the purpose of his friends is doubtless first of all to exclude Mr Lloyd George from their ranks, and to keep in their hands that now dismoded instrument of policy—the party chest. But these manœuvres are trivial and inapposite, and they are recorded only because they serve to show that not even a war which touches wellnigh the whole world can shake Mr Asquith

and the Liberal party from its outworn routine.

Meanwhile the departing Ministers promise their aid to the new Government. They will keep their sacred organisation intact, and in other respects they will support benevolently the Ministers who are responsible for carrying on the war. This is as it should be; and it is merely paying back in kind the benefits which they themselves have received. And yet we hear of their promises with a certain uneasiness. It is evident in all they say and do that they regard themselves as "Liberals" first and as Englishmen afterwards. And when the time has come to close our ranks, to present to the enemy a solid front, there is no room and no excuse for Liberals or for Tories. The one thing necessary for salvation to-day is unity of thought and aim. We must put away from us resolutely such foolish toys as party politics. We must think of nothing except those plans and enterprises which may help us to defeat Germany. If the Kaiser snatched from us an inconclusive peace, it would matter not a jot what political labels we put upon ourselves. We might continue to mumble that we were Tories or Radicals. For a generation or for two we should cease to be free and independent Englishmen.

The natural relief which the change of Government caused us was intensified a hundred-fold when we discovered Ger-

many's new trick to fool the neutrals. The proposals of peace set forth pompously by Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg have now no terrors for us. We know that Lord Haldane, the friend of that sympathetic gentleman Herr Ballin, has no longer the free entry into our Government offices. No more can he pose as a Minister, unaccredited and without portfolio, and yet free to carry his dangerous advice whither he chooses. We know also that "the unseen hand" is not heavy upon English Ministers, and that no dark intrigue will prevent our Ministers from speaking aloud the truth that is in them. And indeed Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg has given them the opportunity which they desired. There can be no doubt that he prepared his plot before the new Government came into power, and that he found it too late to withdraw from a ridiculous position. The Germans have always been stupid, but they never sank to a greater depth of stupidity than when, just as we are beginning the war in earnest, they came before Europe in the white robes of a sentimental philanthropy. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's motives are of the loftiest kind, he would have the world believe. His only desire is to prevent bloodshed and put an end to the cruelties of war. He should have thought of this before, at his master's bidding, he plunged Europe into a war for which the Germans alone were prepared. On him and on his kind there

lies the stain of bloodguiltiness; and we, the Powers of the Entente, propose to punish his Emperor and his people for the crimes which they have committed, before we lay down our arms or think, even momentarily, of the blessings of peace.

So with a finished hypocrisy the men who made the war and willed the war attempt to throw the burden of responsibility upon those who are still fighting for their lives and their liberties. In a single breath the German Chancellor brags of his country's strength and of his country's magnanimity. We have learned enough about Germany in the last two years to know how much the boastfulness of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg is worth. When he proclaims aloud that Germany's strength has not made Germany's "ears deaf to her responsibility before God, before our own nation, and before humanity," we see our old friend, Mr Pecksniff, in his accustomed attitude. Again, says the German Chancellor, the war is "a catastrophe, which thousands of years of common civilisation were unable to prevent, and which injures the most precious achievements of humanity." This rodomontade has neither sense nor reason. The war came, not because thousands of years of civilisation were unable to prevent it, but because Germany, having prepared for fifty years and being alone of the nations ready for warfare, believed that she could snatch the hegemony of the

world. And then the German Chancellor, with tears in his voice, laments that "the spiritual and material progress which was the pride of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century is threatened with ruin." It may be threatened, but if to-day we made an infamous peace with Germany, we should have passed beyond the region of threats and ensured for ever the ruin of our civilisation.

We need not take Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's blusterings too seriously. The most highly Germanised neutral is not likely to be over-persuaded by the German Chancellor's fantastic mixture of hypocrisy and blackmail. We believe in his pretence of injured innocence as little as we fear his threats of renewed "frightfulness." We have taken the measure of our foe, and we have a perfect confidence in the future. We know also that Germany is proposing terms of peace not from the pretended motives of humanity—of humanity she knows and feels nothing—but because she looks towards the future with apprehension. She has passed her zenith, and she knows it. The Allies have not reached theirs, and are still in complete possession of their confidence and fortitude. The winter which lies ahead of us will prove a far sorer trial to the blockaded Germans than to us, and the Kaiser knows his people well enough to recognise that there is a point of endurance beyond which it cannot go. The command of the sea, still in our hands, despite the

well-advertised achievements of the German submarines, is the final element of victory. The German Chancellor, then, may boast and bleat as he chooses to the neutral nations. They know his method accurately enough by this time. Great Britain and her Allies will turn a deaf ear to his rhetoric, because they can no longer be deceived with words. The insincerity of the Germans has been patent to us all for two years and a half, and we have but one answer to all these Teutonic blandishments, an answer which will be delivered in the field of battle and on the ocean.

There are many reasons why we refuse to consider the German terms of peace, and the most potent of them all is this: that we cannot parley with a dishonourable foe. Had Germany revered the laws of chivalry, had she spoken the truth and fought in accord with the rules of humane and civilised warfare, it might have been possible to open a discussion of peace. But from the very first the Germans have taken upon themselves what they thought the rights and privileges of "supermen." They adopted for their own the preposterous doctrine of Nietzsche, the man who despised them and their pedantries most bitterly, and they declared, in word and act, that those things were virtues in them which were deemed crimes in others. We shall never forget Germany's own sublime contempt for "a scrap of paper," and it will ever be

clear to us that a nation which tears up treaties at will cannot be trusted to reverence the terms of peace. If we were mad enough, as happily we are not, to patch up a temporary armistice with Germany, we could have no guarantee that she would adhere loyally to the documents which she had signed. Moreover, the outrages which the Germans committed in their progress through Belgium in the first weeks of the war are written among the records of history in letters of blood. There was no law, human or Divine, which the bandits did not trample under foot. The evidence reported by Lord Bryce's Committee is but a blurred image of the truth, and we cannot make peace until these manifold brutalities are avenged. Between us and the tranquil resuming of civilised pursuits there stands the spectre of Belgium, and until that hideous ghost be laid there cannot be talk of terms and concessions and all the solemn accompaniments of an honest treaty. And at every step taken in the war the Germans have put themselves further and further beyond the pale of civilisation. True to their ancient traditions of sacrilege, they have destroyed churches and libraries. "Remember Louvain and Rheims" is a simple injunction graven upon the hearts of all of us. We cannot allow it to go down the ages that the Germans have fought like soldiers and like men. Wherever their assassins have passed they

have left the indelible marks of their cruelty and wantonness. They hoped by a policy of terror, ordered and arranged at headquarters, to frighten the nations into peace, and now that terror as a weapon has failed, they whimper about the material and spiritual progress which is threatened with ruin! They may be sure that it is not from them that we shall take our standard of progress; it is not by their example that we shall practise the virtues of humanity.

And now on the very eve of craving peace the Germans have committed as vile a crime and as gross a blunder as have ever defiled their blood-stained record. Not content with extorting every possible penny that they could wring from the occupied portions of France and Belgium, not satisfied with starving whole provinces, they have deliberately sent many thousands of women and children and men into slavery. Unable to extinguish the loyalty and patriotism of France and Belgium, they have done their best, unavailingly, to kill the soul of the people. With the utmost cruelty civil populations are torn from their homes, and sent to do Germany's work in the fields or in the trenches. Thus have the Huns defied the laws of civilised warfare, and with the blood not of soldiers but of murderers upon their hands, they come before Europe whining for peace. What sort of peace would it be, dictated and contrived by the criminal? A

peace which would load Europe with the shackles of infamy for ever, a peace which no statesman of the Allied nations could consider for a moment without being hurled from his office in disgrace. The Kaiser chose the time, which pleased him, to go to war. We shall choose the time, which pleases us, to make peace. And even Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg must know that that time is not yet.

With their usual cunning the Germans have addressed their proposals with the greatest assiduity to the neutrals, who no doubt would be ready enough to return to the pleasant commerce which prevailed three years ago. But it is not from the neutrals that any decision may come. They have neither shed blood nor spent treasure in the waging of this war. They have accepted with an amazing equanimity the wanton assault which Germany has committed upon their shipping. For the rest they have taken the advice which some high-minded Radicals gave to us on the day before war was declared: they have traded with both belligerents, and have grown rich in the business. But the advantages which they have won from our sacrifices do not entitle them to change, by a feather's weight, our resolution. We, who have borne the burden of the battle, the heat of the day, retain in our own hands the complete control of our destiny, and we shall not sheathe our swords until the victory which was begun at

the Battle of the Marne is consummated and complete.

An incidental consequence of the war has been revealed by a Bill introduced into the House of Lords by Lord D'Abernon. That which was begun by the ill-omened death duties is being brought to a disastrous conclusion by the conflict with Germany. The works of art, which have long been our proud inheritance, are being packed off post-haste to America. The paintings of old masters, noble editions of fine books, all the pleasant things in which we once took a reasonable delight, are passing from our hands into the keeping of men enriched by the spoils of a war in which they have taken no part, and wholly insensitive to the value of money. It is one, and by no means the least, of the hardships of war. Man does not live by bread alone, whether he be fighting or at peace, and the day will come, when, with arms laid down, we contemplate our devastated picture galleries and depleted libraries with shame and regret. It is true that all the belligerents must accustom themselves to the same trial. Even Dr von Bode has not lately had the chance of adding another Flora, of proved inauthenticity, to the collection at Berlin. And there is no doubt that at the peace the masterpieces, which the thievish fingers of the Germans have ravished, will be restored decently to their homes. But the universality of hardship makes it no easier to bear, and

we are the heaviest losers, because the artistic wealth stored in our country, upon which the Americans depend for the enrichment of their houses and museums, is far greater than that stored elsewhere.

There are several methods by which we might safeguard our interests in this matter. We might follow the example of Italy, and forbid works of art to leave the country upon any pretext whatever. That we shall have the courage to approve so drastic a measure as this we do not believe for a moment. Nor, so long as the death duties remain in force, would it be just or practicable. Again, we might place such a sum in the hands of the Trustees of the National Gallery as would enable them to compete in the open market for the masterpieces which their owners are forced to part with. When peace comes again to the world, that (we think) would be the right and dignified way out of the difficulty. Meanwhile a well-known painter has suggested that a tax of ten per cent should be charged upon all pictures which leave the country, and that the money thus acquired should be used by the Trustees to purchase what works they deemed essential for the national collections. The suggestion is wise, and there is no reason why the proceeds of this prudent tax should not presently supplement the munificence of the Treasury.

Lord D'Abernon's proposal is far different from these, far

wider and more hazardous in its scope. He would enable the Trustees, with guarantees that they would use their power aright, to dispose by sale or otherwise of duplicates or of pictures which they thought unnecessary for the collection. Thus they might establish a fund wherewith to compete with Americans and others in the auction-room. At first sight the plan appears simple enough. But it has two faults, which we trust will prevent its acceptance. In the first place, it appears to tamper with the honour of the State, and, in the second, it suggests, what is not true, that the firmest guarantees that could be devised would be a sufficient protection against the danger of constantly changing taste.

The National Gallery has grown by accident, like many other British institutions. It owes its increase purely to public money, partly to private generosity. And it has appealed to private generosity, because the owners of pictures, who have presented or bequeathed them to the gallery, have cherished a perfect faith in the security of their gift or their bequest. They have thought, rightly enough, that here is a place where pictures will find an undisturbed resting-place, that, if once the Trustees had accepted a work of art, it would remain upon the walls in perpetuity. Rightly or wrongly, this has been an inducement to the generous, and any scheme which would discourage the generosity of painters and col-

lectors stands condemned at first sight. The painter whom the Trustees had primarily in their mind when they devised their scheme was Turner. Of that there can be no doubt. The National Gallery possesses some two thousand of his works, and it is thought that no advantage is done to the people by what the Trustees deem an over-representation. The works of Turner stand high in the market just now, though we should have thought that, with half the world at war, this was not the best time to sell, and it is hoped that by disposing judiciously of some of his pictures we might find the money wherewith to buy masterpieces, of which the Gallery stands in instant need. But where, in this policy of buying and selling, does Turner come in? He did not leave his pictures to the nation that they might be knocked down to the highest bidder, and presently find a home across the Atlantic. He bequeathed them to us to be a possession for all time, and if we get rid of one of them we are false to our trust. We need not have accepted them. If we find them an incubus, we might have declined to admit them into our National Gallery. But when once they had gained admission, it should be beyond our power to remove one of them. An Act of Parliament may enable us to do what we will. It can never excuse us if we neglect a moral obligation.

The nation did not treat Turner with the highest consideration. The gallery which he demanded for the display

of his pictures was granted only at the last moment, and the institution for the benefit of decayed artists, which he desired, was not founded. And if, further, the proposed injustice be done to his memory, how shall we hope that other painters will follow the example of his beneficence? If we break faith with him and others, we shall most surely impoverish our collection in the future. Those who hope for their pictures a home, not an inn, will think twice before they entrust them to the care of a set of Trustees armed with all the powers of sale and disposal.

And the other reason why we should view Lord D'Abernon's plan with distrust is no less weighty in condemnation. Human taste changes and shifts with the passing hours. There is nothing less stable in the whole experience of man. In art gospels become heresies, heresies rise to gospels more rapidly than in other fields of activity. The connoisseur, arrogant as he is, stands not upon the rock of fact, but on the moving sand of opinion. We esteem to-day what we detested yesterday, and to-morrow we shall stone those whom to-day we esteem as prophets. Without casting the smallest slur upon the wise men who to-day control the destiny of our National Gallery, we are compelled to admit that they are not immortal. They can neither bind their successors nor assure to us any continuity of taste. There was a time when the most of men

would have sold Rembrandts to buy the works of Greuze, or would cheerfully have exchanged a masterpiece by Velasquez for a chaste example of Guido Reni. It may be true that no man is great until he be dead, but dead painters put grandeur on and off, like a garment, at the mere bidding of the auctioneer. Moreover, a collection of pictures, if it be not disturbed, has a value apart from the worth of the individual canvases of which it is composed. It reflects, and it is well that it should reflect, the changing taste of the ages. We point to one period as the time when the Italian primitives were most piously sought for, to another period as the time at which Velasquez came into his universal empire. And, where all things are recorded, why should we blot out this clear record of taste, good or evil? In brief, we like not a plan which puts so great a power in the hands of the Trustees—that if they chanced to be unanimous they might make the National Gallery a mere hospital for cranks. We prefer continuity to disturbance, even though the continuity be marred now and again by evil choices; and we look forward confidently to the future, when the munificence of the Government and the self-denial of opulent owners will make it possible for us to hold our own against all buyers without doing dishonour to the dead, or putting too large a faith in the taste and discretion of Trustees, who shall surely pass away, like the flowers of the field.

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THE SCENE OF WAR.—V.

THE FRENCH ON THE SOMME.

"Allons-y ! c'est pour la patrie."

I HAD seen the mighty effort of our people on the Somme, and had witnessed the battle for Morval and Lesbœufs from a point very near the left wing of our gallant allies; but I had not yet seen the French in action. I was therefore glad to know that an opportunity was now to be given me of doing so.

Our headquarters were in an old Cathedral town, in whose streets and squares there were almost as many Englishmen as Frenchmen; while at our hotel the khaki and the grey-blue were closely intermingled. It was the meeting-point here, a little in the rear, of the two armies.

The early morning found us on one of those straight, logical roads—unlike our own—that run with their French directness and singleness of purpose

from one considered point to another. It was a road animated by all the stir and preparation of organised war; which, as it is developed by the patient and strenuous industry of her people throughout France, comes slowly, like the shaft of a lance to its blade-point, to its final conclusion here upon the Front. So overwhelming is the interest of the Fighting Line—that strange, shifting, and tragic area, where the thoughts and ideals of men are brought to the anvil of war—that one is prone to neglect these mighty preparations, this patient and faithful toil that is the prelude to victory.

As we swept along the straight white road, it was thronged with these symbols of the will and tenacity of France.

"Under the light, sparkling

surface of this people," said my companion, "there resides a core of indestructible granite, and the Boche is up against it now."

So he is; and the granite is legible upon the faces of all those men who toil upon these long white roads that are the arteries of war.

Gone for the moment are the vivacity and the joy; but the infinite patience, the undying valour, these remain; and let us bow to them when we meet them on the road.

Here are the menders restoring to the road its traditional perfection; reclaiming it foot by foot from the indignity that has been put upon it. Here are the drivers of the waggons, carrying to their brethren the provender of battle; the food and the fuel they need for their sustenance, the shells and cartridges they claim for the intruder upon their ancient soil. White with the dust, seamed with the sweat and the stress of their traffic, hard and enduring, these men have but one purpose at heart, one end in view; and to this their strength is uncomplainingly directed.

Beside them, along the Light Railway that cleaves the fields, there move the great guns, the armoured cars, and gallant engines, the steel waggons full of shells.

The Light Railways converge at the temporary terminus a little behind the battle line, and a great activity is concentrated here at the base of supply. Here are planks by the million for huts and trenches; hurdles upon which

in the approaching winter the tired soldier may sleep without becoming imbedded in the slough and mud; lines upon lines and masses of shells, like a vast army waiting to go up and slay the enemy; sidings and platforms for each variety of goods; shining rails of steel as complex as the network of Clapham Junction; stores of every imaginable kind.

Side by side with the Poilus works the captive Boche.

"I ask from him nothing more than I do from my own people," says the Colonel in command, "and if he would work nearly as well as my own *Pères de famille* of forty-five I should be content."

He doesn't, of course; but then the Father of Forty-five is a freeman, working of his own will for the good of his country; the other is a captive.

It is a busy scene, interrupted from time to time by the thrust of war. The German aeroplane, when it can get so far, drops its bombs, under cover of the night, upon the little colony, killing friend and foe alike; and Fritz and François lie beside each other stricken by the same missile. The sound of the battle is heard in the distance, and the shadows of evening are lit with the summer lightning of the guns.

Farther upon the road are the great guns that travel by rail, and heave their shells a distance of twenty kilometres. You can see them in the autumn mists like mammoths pointing their trunks towards the invader, and from time to time you can see the flame as it issues from their lips; you

can hear the thunder of their voices as the *gros obus* go hurtling through the sky. If you go up to them you will find them like Leviathan at home in a field, and behind each gun the waggon of steel in which his provender is laid.

When the door of the waggon is opened, one of the sleeping creatures is nipped by the claws of a travelling-crane and deposited like a puppy in a cradle that moves along an aerial line of rail, until it is arrived at the mighty breach, its last resting-place before it fulfils its destiny.

The slow twisting of a screw behind it sends it forth with a persuasive impulse into the open breach; the door is closed upon its mystery; and then with a mighty music it sweeps upon the world, a living thing.

Beside this portent the quiet cattle pasture, indifferent even to its voice; the women toil with bent shoulders in the fields they love, and the life of the hamlet moves upon its ancient course.

When evening comes, the people of the gun gather together like factory-workers after the day's toil, and you can see them in a dark silhouette against the reddening sky, as a truck carries them away to their billets. One of the last to leave is the Battery Commander, a man who is the human equivalent of his charge; solid and direct; a hard and determined hitter.

And here in another corner of the world, upon the fringe of the Fighting Line, is the Aviators' home. The place pulses with the very Spirit

of Attack. The French air-men, like our men, hold the initiative, and seek out and destroy the enemy wherever he is to be found. As we stand here upon the wood's edge, facing the open plain, the Aeroplanes come home from their raids across the frontier, and the still country air resounds to their flight. The music of their pinions is like the sound of the sea afar off; or, as they come near, like the vibration of a great beetle homing in Brobdingnag.

First there is one, and then another, until the host is assembled and dormant upon the grass. But there is one that has not come back. Has he fought his fight for the last time, and will his comrades see him no more? We search the sky with a sharp inquiry, but there is no reply.

Inside the hangars there are some new models—French and English. These are the fighting planes, for one man only. You can see where he sits with his eye upon the world, his time-piece before him, his feet upon the pedal, his hand upon the machine, the trigger of his gun apt for his instant use, the long roll of cartridges gleaming on the tape below, the engine upon which his life depends, the linen wings of flight, the slender wires of steel that stand between him and sudden death.

High up there, 10,000 feet above the earth, the solitary flier fights and makes his battle alone. In a world that is drilled and driven as if the human entity were nothing, here is a corner in which the individual attains once more his right to

exist. And it is here where you might look to find this—that the Briton and the Frenchman are supreme. The man triumphs over the machine. You can see it in the faces of those men who ride the air. Youth and gaiety revive here in the hearts of our friends. It is no longer endurance but victory that meets us in their eyes. These are the men of the new generation that will transform France in the coming years.

"You wish to know something of the mechanism of our latest machines," says the Commandant; "well, you cannot do better than have P——, he will tell you all about them;" and with this he turns towards a bright-faced boy and puts his arm affectionately about his shoulders.

"Sub-Lieutenant P——," he says, "has brought down six of the enemy's planes."

The Sub-Lieutenant is as cherubic and serene as a midshipman. His manner is cheery and confident, his brain as clear as crystal.

We learn from him all about the new machine that there is to tell; and one of us is so impressed that he murmurs something about the airman's superhuman task. "*Oh! nous,*" replies the Superman, "*on ne fait pas de gros travail. . . . On nous dit: 'Il y a là ou là trois Boches, qu'il faut tuer.' Alors nous, on y va, et on les abat si l'on peut. C'est tout.*"

It was Böleke, one of the bravest of the German airmen, who could not fathom the inexplicable British spirit of sport. The French, he said, take their

flying fatalistically, with the grimmest earnestness.

But he reckoned without the rising generation.

In one of the tents in the bosom of the wood, there is gathered together each day the harvest the aviators bring home. Here are photographs of the most wonderful description, showing with the accuracy of a Recording Angel every detail of the German lines; and from these there is prepared from day to day—one might almost say from hour to hour—a map, showing the development of the enemy's trenches as he is driven from point to point, the emplacements of his guns, his captive balloons, the points at which his aeroplanes were brought down. You are seized, as you look at these, with a sense of the painstaking science of war.

It is in a place like this that you learn once for all what Air Supremacy means,—its part in the coming Victory.

I have claimed for these our people that they surpass in their individuality the enemy; so do the French machines. The Boche has made the mistake you would expect of him—of trusting to a standardised type, produced in large numbers in factories. The Frenchman, with a finer instinct, has allowed for a diversity of type. For the functions of air-machines in war are of many kinds. To record a few of the most obvious: there is the Plane that takes photographs; the Fighting Plane, with a superb turn of speed; the Bomb-Thrower;

the Artillery Plane, that guides the fire of the guns; the Infantry Plane, that helps to keep the advancing troops in touch.

The photographs are taken from a height of from between three to four thousand feet; and as soon as they are handed in they are put rapidly through the developer, and printed so swiftly that within a day thousands of them are ready for distribution.

Each of these photographs is examined with a searching eye, with magnifying glasses or stereoscopes, by men specially trained for this job.

Inferences are drawn from pin-points that could mean nothing to the casual observer; and a marvellous array of facts is placed at the disposal of the attacking troops. Thousands of lives are saved by this agency alone.

Later, when the attack has been launched and the fight is at its fiercest; when the telephone wires have been snapped and uprooted from the earth; when the Barrage fire makes a deadly wall which even the gallant Liaison messengers, the bravest of the brave, can scarcely penetrate—it is again the aeroplane, with its wireless apparatus, that comes to the help of the soldier and enables the Army Commander to control and direct the movements of his force. It is the aeroplane that saves men from that most bitter of all inflictions—the fire of their own guns. The task of the aviator, as he flies low over the deadly *mêlée*, is

full of peril; and it calls for a mind that will work at its finest under a hail of fire, indifferent to all personal risks. You must be a brave man, with nerves of steel, to play that game.

Take the record of but one of these heroes—

“Lieutenant——. He fought six combats in the air, forcing two of the enemy’s planes to the ground within their own lines. He showed in these circumstances the most absolute contempt for death, paying not the slightest attention to the fact that in four of these fights his plane was repeatedly hit by the machine-gun fire of the enemy. On the 15th of March 1916, although his mitrailleuse had jammed, he carried out the task assigned to him, scattering the enemy’s planes by a series of audacious manoeuvres, and returned to headquarters with his machine riddled with bullets.”

But the number of such episodes is legion.

Beyond the great guns and the Aviation Camp, the road now carries us into the dread Land of War. You cannot mistake it if you have once seen it here in France; for it is the negation of all that you have held most dear upon this earth. In this land Ruin walks hand in hand with Death. The green meadows and the russet orchards, the lovely woods that should be turning to gold and amber and cinnabar; the creepers that should be climbing in crimson upon the cottage walls; the old people at their doors,

the children at the gate, the rose-cheeked maidens blushing with the sap and flow of life; the blue smoke of each homestead curling into the quiet sky; the lights at the windows; the stir and music of the street, — all these have gone.

Aceldama, it has become a place of woe; and Golgotha, a place of skulls.

One cannot convey to another, who has not seen it, the desolation and horror of the scene. The fields are of a melancholy brown, where dying weeds hang their dejected and tattered heads; the woods are ghostly remnants of what once were trees, but are now misshapen and tortured forms that grieve the open sky; the houses where they retain any form at all are ruined beyond the semblance of human habitations, with roofs that grin at one like the teeth of a skull, and walls that look as if a leprosy had fastened upon their tottering remains. The white highway, that was once so superb and finished a thing, the lineal heir of Rome, is now as weary and as broken as if it led to Hell.

A side-road from it—one of these familiar and domestic things we love—leads to the hamlet and Château of —, and it is the most pitiful semblance of a road upon which human footsteps ever echoed since man began to call himself civilised. In its earlier part we can still discover the alignment of its avenue, its outline of what were once trees. Some, hit in the middle by a furious shell,

lift the dark fragments of their trunks a few feet above the soil; others stand like shivered masts against the grey weeping sky. Upon none is there any sign or tremor of life, save where the bark flaps with a melancholy insistence as if it wished to speak. The fields upon either side of it are completely bereft of everything that grows, and so pitted with the accuracy of the shells that they are like a smallpox that has fastened upon the face of the earth. Its surface is littered with the *débris* of battle; with helmets and water-bottles riddled, like those who owned them, with bullet-holes; with bombs and hand-grenades and unexploded shells and unused cartridges; and fragments of men's clothes and accoutrements. Even to walk here you need to exercise a vigilant discretion, for a touch of the foot might stir any one of these sinister things that look like rattles and fir-cones into violent life; and it is well not to look too closely into the pits where the remnants of human creatures protrude from the sheltering earth.

When you look up from these pitfalls and these gins, you see about you the torment of what is called a reciprocal bombardment.

From the wood you have left behind you there come the incessant flashes of the French guns; upon the pocked fields there fall from moment to moment the shells of the German howitzers, sending up columns of black cloud and geysers of mud, and the grey void over your head is peopled

with the voices of invisible hosts. You cannot see them, yet you feel every time you look up that you ought to see them, so near are they, so insistent is their cry. There is the crash of the German 77, the rending tear of the *soixante-quinze* that almost splits your ear-drums, the deep-toned oooing howl of the howitzer followed by its appalling smash, the false note of the ill-made shell that knows not whither it is bound, the sudden cry and rattle of the mitrailleuse seeking its prey.

Such is the orchestra of the battlefield; but terrifying as it is, you soon get used to it, and go plodding along the road with scarcely a touch of physical discomfort. Presently some one will know how to get a picture of these invisible agents of death, a record of their devilish voices; and then with the film of the cinema before you, showing men in the instant of death, you will have your battlefield displayed for your edification without moving from your chair. But for the moment a little effort is needed to know what these things are like.

In the midst of these surroundings, in the shelter of a cemented and bomb-proof casemate taken from the enemy, is a Poste de Secours, or advanced dressing-station for the wounded. It is so dark in here that you need a few moments to adjust your vision; but in a little while the dim crowd at the entrance resolves itself into its component units, and in the considerate shadows you can see

the newly wounded, the dying, and the sufferers from shell-shock. I doubt if there is anything more pitiful than the sight of these broken men. A wound you can understand, but here is something that goes deeper. They sit here, in their grey-blue uniforms, their trench helmets still upon their heads, but bowed down and unable to speak. The fire has been stolen from their hearts.

"A couple of days' rest," says the Surgeon, "and they will be all right." So they will—but think of what they must have gone through to be here. When these men hear the sound of a gun their bodies wilt as if they had been hit.

A little way beyond stands the Château of —, a heap of rubbish; and if it be your purpose to call upon the officer in command, you must burrow into this rubbish-heap, and pass, like the wolf and the cony, from the light of day. Then you will find him in the cellar of the Château, a brain at work by the light of a solitary lamp. In one dim corner there lies in a dejected pile the library of this country house, rescued and brought together by these kindly people; and if books are anything to you, if they have solaced your grief or added to your joys, you will feel as distressed by the misery and ruin that have overtaken them as by the all but inhuman agony that meets your eyes. Some of them bear the arms of the Dukes of Chaulnes. Do you remember how Madame

de Sévigné loved this neighbourhood, *si beau, si charmant*?

In another dim corner, with their faces turned to the wall, are the family portraits. Upon the narrow deal table that is supported at one end for want of a leg by a Louis XVI. settee upholstered in watered silk, there are the wonderful staff-maps of the advancing line of battle, showing the enemy's trenches, the emplacements of his guns, his fortified positions. All that the aeroplanes see from the heaven above is recorded here.

Here is the place they are going to take to-morrow—the Sucrerie of Genermont. "*Voilà un gros morceau*," says the Colonel, tapping it cheerily with his finger. "We give them no rest; trench by trench, foot by foot (and a foot here is often a hundred metres), we drive them before us. Our men are simply splendid. But we do not waste them. No! In this war of Exhaustion it is our business to kill, not to be killed."

And this is the lesson that the French, with their keen intuition, their genius for war, have learnt, perhaps a little quicker than we have.

"*Deux petits blessés*," said the General to me this morning, "in exchange for seven hundred prisoners. We pounded them to the last fraction of a second, and when our men fell upon them it was 'Kamerad.'"

It is not always so; with the best of preparation there is often both hard and bitter fighting to be done; there is

the revenge of the enemy's artillery when his ruined trenches are taken by our troops; but in the long-run this is the lesson we are learning from two years of war; and it is the gun-factories and the munition-girls who are helping us to apply it.

The Boche says, "Look at the map"; we reply, "Look at our prisoners and at your dead."

In this chamber of the Château the French when they advanced found six German officers killed, not by wounds but by the concussion of a shell. "It fell there," said the Colonel, pointing to the circle of light by the hole through which we had come; "and when we entered we found them with the blood oozing from their ears and noses, their blood-vessels ruptured, but otherwise intact."

He shrugged his shoulders, and put up the palms of his hands.

"We should do no better if one fell there now——" His manner was cheery and vital, the faces about him smiling and courteous. He might have been the Master of the house receiving us in the big drawing-room upstairs.

"Why! Yes!" he said, "I have no objection to your going up to the First Line; but be careful, I pray you. I should be desolated," and he smiled with a touch of irony, "if anything happened to you."

As we emerged into the daylight, a French plane came flying low over the ruins of the Château, ringed about with

black puffs of shrapnel, which pursued her like hounds.

All about us lay the remnants of the Château. That rubbish-heap there was its farm, and that blistered spot upon which no blade of grass was visible was its lawn. Those withered trees were its sheltering wood, and here and there we could trace the fragments of its encircling wall. The whole of its area was seamed with the German trenches. An officer who was with me looked at it with a cool and deliberate air.

"Quite done for," he said, "and I happen to know that De K—— spent three hundred thousand francs on it just before the war broke out."

It is thus that you realise what France has endured.

We were now obliged to enter the shelter of the long communication trench; and from time to time as we stopped to look over its walls we could see the Artillery battle progressing with an increasing fury, the flight of the German aeroplanes, and the falling ever nearer and nearer of the shells. Here and there in the general waste there survived the fragment of a wall, a solitary tree which helped to mark the direction we were taking. All else was a void, blistered beyond all earthly semblance.

The black face of a nigger peeping out from this Inferno was a startling apparition.

We found him presently, one of a party, clearing the ruined trenches. Pipe in mouth, clad in the same blue helmet and uniform, they worked here side

by side with their French brethren. Brethren they were, too, in their easy and friendly companionship. In the hospitals, too, you find them so—black face and white face near each other, bound by the tie of common sacrifice.

Every here and there a small wooden cross, standing up from the walls of the trench with some simple inscription, "Un brave Français," showed where lay the remnants of one who had died for his country.

And then we came to a point which the diggers had not yet reached; whence the tide of battle had barely ebbed, and the trenches still lay as they had been left by the beaten enemy.

"Here, where we stand now," said one who was with us, "you see the *débris* of a barrage across which the Boche and our people threw hand-grenades at each other, until we broke through and drove them before us."

Every few yards there was a shaft leading down from the trench into a dug-out, and in each of these dug-outs there lay rifles and bandoliers and gas-masks, hastily abandoned by the enemy; and sometimes these dug-outs were sealed by the explosion of a shell, and in them there lay those who had been killed or buried alive.

And so we came to where the dead still lay unburied; the human creature with all his potentialities, reduced to that which had better remain undescribed. . . .

We still went on, and as I turned to look back I found that I was alone with C——,

an officer of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, who strode on before me gay and exultant.

"We are about 300 metres now from the Boche; let us see what's happening," said he, and climbing a little way up the broken wall of the trench, he looked out upon the howling waste.

It was the same tragic scene that had met our eyes since first we embarked upon this journey—but more deadly, more intense in its mournful expression. The increasing battle, the loud explosions of the shells, the rattle of the machine-guns, the German planes venturing here and there within our reach, the rising columns and masses of black smoke, the dead men lying below, gave me an impression that can never fade of the hell into which the best and bravest of the world go with a smile.

And then a little incident occurred which brought the scene to a sort of personal climax. For as I stood here, absorbed in its detail, I saw approaching me, racing across the grey waste, like some footballer dashing for his goal, a small black creature, clearly visible, swaying from side to side, yet furiously intent upon its course. I dropped into the trench to the sound of a smashing explosion; a shower of mud, and a heavy fall as de V——, who had been following us, rolled over at my feet.

"*Nous l'avons échappé belle,*" laughed C——, brushing the mud from his tunic, and as I did the same a small warm object fell from the folds of my coat.

"It was the wind of the damned thing that knocked me over," said de V——, picking himself up, somewhat abashed.

We found the shell on the lip of the trench fuming as if with rage at having failed of its purpose.

We were evidently in luck; for Mr Bass, of an American paper—an old campaigner who carries with him a wound from the Russian front—who should have been where it fell, had fortunately dropped a couple of yards behind. The rest of our party, farther off, seeing the shell fall, retired to a dug-out, assured that we should never meet again. A pause of a second or two—a yard this way or that,—such is the interval between all that life means to us and the bleak oblivion of death.

It is a risk that the soldier at the Front takes every day of his life.

"Don't be distressed for me if I fall," says he, writing to mother or wife, "it is a glorious death to die."

We ate our lunch in an underground mansion, which for the past two years had been the home of a German General and his Staff. It was a very elaborate piece of subterranean architecture, right under the metalled surface of the Route Nationale from Amiens to St Quentin, and if you look out for it you will find a water-colour of it in the best of all the illustrated papers of the war. Its façade, to which we descended by a flight of steps, was after the style of a Bavarian chalet, with a

spirited inscription in German Gothic, to the effect that, in spite of old Joffre's ugly faces, no shells could reach them there. Beside it, on the cemented side-wall, there was a neat little tablet of a chaste simplicity—

“OFFERED TO OUR GENERAL
BY HIS BRETONS.”

There were sandbags and cemented works to enhance its safety; and within there was the parlour where we lunched, with a piano against the wooden walls and a frieze of vines along the cornice. Behind there was the General's bedroom, with a spring mattress stolen from the nearest château; a big gilt mirror in which he might survey his person; an arm-chair covered in crimson velvet, in which he might take his after-luncheon nap; and pictures of the Fatherland upon the walls to soothe his sentimental soul.

Where, I wonder, is that German General now?

The kitchen was a dream; and since the great must have the small to wait upon them, there were cabins, not quite so luxurious, for his personal attendants. There was electric light.

Clearly this warrior had an eye to the amenities of life, and it was our luck to profit by them. The fare was good, the roof shell-proof, and as we sat together here about the table in the happy fellowship that comes of association with the French, the most delightful of all people at a meal, we laughed over the incidents of the morning and forgot the roaring of the guns outside.

And when we had finished, we climbed out into the open again to find François Flameng, with his fresh face and cheery air, his blue trench helmet on his head, and a pipe in the corner of his mouth, painting the villa. The French officers of our party were delighted to see him. There was much hand-shaking and friendly chaff, and we had the honour of being introduced to the painter.

It seems that M. Flameng has permission to go where he likes and to paint whatever pleases his eye. Since the beginning of the War he has been busy in this way, and there is no one better known in trench and camp than this distinguished and joyous personage. It was a great and a very unexpected pleasure to see him at work.

The scene amidst which these events transpired was of an impressive character. Above it there rose in its tragic and misshapen lines the gaunt skeleton of a wood. At one end of it there was a cemetery of new-made graves, each with its wooden cross and simple inscription: “Guyot Pierre—Soldier of France”—“Lieutenant M—”, an affectionate tribute from his Company.” Beside them stood a tall man in a long buff coat with his cassock peeping from under it, a trench helmet on his head, and a face like that of Christ, with his blonde beard and gentle eyes. Next to him stood the Divisional Surgeon, a humorous character: “Un vrai type,” said an officer, laughing at his singular manner and speech; about them there moved upon

their varied business the French infantry, hardy and matter-of-fact.

With a sudden whir an aeroplane came flying over the tree-tops, almost brushing them with its wings. And beyond these the heavy batteries roared their menace, and the ground shook with their wrath. It was a beautiful sight, too, in its way: the low concealed valley; the blue figures moving amongst the trees; the Battery Commanders, cool and icy in their places of control, their clear peremptory voices cleaving the welter of sound; the men at the guns like stokers at a furnace; the sudden flash, the bursting roar, the recoil; and in the grey sky, visible to the eye, the messenger of Death upon his way. Over all, ceaseless in their brooding, the French aviators flying low over the field of vision, the eyes of France fixed upon the enemy.

We met the General at work in his dug-out in another part of the field. It was another habitation to that of his German rival. "*Voilà mon Cabinet de travail*," said he, ushering me into the smallest of little rooms by the roadside, with a table in it, a chair, a telephone, and a staff-map upon the wall. Some steps out in the mud led down to his bedroom, which

was like a steamer cabin. The bulb of an electric light hung beside his bed. "A present from the Boche," he said. Next door his Staff were at work, the telephone was constantly in action, and a despatch rider occasionally came peppering up the road.

We climbed up into the field above. The same desolate waste, the same mournful void that war creates wherever it places its deadly hand. Upon the skyline I could see the faint outlines of the Bois de Trones, by which I had stood on the day of the British battle. French and English, hand in hand, good friends and loyal comrades, we go forward, never doubting, to the ultimate goal, sealing our compact with the blood of our peoples.

Can we ever forget them, or they us?

And then, as I stood here with the General—a man of the old type, vivid and martial, a soldier of France—some homing pigeons came flying through the grey sky, gentle of wing and faithful to their cause; and out of the tarnished waste a lark rose singing into the heavens, above the griefs and the turmoil of men, unconscious of the tragedy about her.

THE SAUSAGE.

The first time I saw the sausage was at Venice. It hung there in the drowsy air over the public gardens, a blot upon the horizon of the beautiful city. It seemed to remain

up there interminably, and one saw it swelling at the end of every canal, bulging over every spire and dome. It was an eyesore, and the one ugly thing in the magical perspective. It

bore too familiar a resemblance to the beer-swilling Boche.

One saw it again frequently, less obtrusive in the soft misty island air, brooding over the night of London. It did not inspire respect or liking. Its amorphous lines, its very captivity, were against it. But one took it for granted, though always with a touch of resentment.

And then I saw it over the battle of the Somme, filling with wind, and seemingly moving in a crescent line, like the Armada when it came sailing up the Channel. It, the sausage, was beautiful then, with the sun painting colours on its curves, and the shrapnel bursting about it in puffs of cloud and fire. If there was any one that one envied on that occasion, it was the man in the Drachen, at whose feet the biggest battle in history was developing in all its marvellous detail. But life, as poor Trilby might have said, is not all beer and skittles up there; the Drachen sometimes becomes excited, and, breaking its nose-string, rushes off to immolation, or the shrapnel just happens to burst inside the observer's car; and in any case one is liable to be very sea-sick up there. To be sea-sick at an altitude of 3000 feet, over the greatest battle in history, might be worse than death.

In the end I got my chance of going up in a Drachen and experiencing some of its emotions for myself. It was upon the great Châlons plain, looking towards the Montagne de Rheims, where the observers learn their job. It was a

cold grey evening, lit with the fires of the setting sun. Upon the earth below the Drachen there was drawn up a squad of French infantry, the section attached for duty with it. In a dug-out that was open at either end there was a motor with a roll of steel—the connecting-cord—and a reel of telephone-wire. When the Drachen is stationary, the motor lives in this shelter; but when it moves the motor emerges, and noses its way steadily in pursuit. Upon the nearest road there is the equipment of the Drachen, consisting of trucks laden with shelter for the men, and a moving bureau in which there are maps and papers, and a journal that is full of striking pages. It is the record of all that the observer has seen: the march of the enemy's infantry through his trenches; the location of his guns; the damage inflicted on him by the French artillery; the lie of his country. It is the record also of the risks and dangers to which the observer has been subjected, and it tells you something of the winds and temperature up there above the scene of conflict.

The car is a wide square basket into which you climb as the Drachen sways and bulges above you, impatient for flight. A heavy fur coat, and a helmet to save your neck in case you should incontinently fall out, are part of the equipment. There is a telephone, and a pair of glasses, and the parachute. The parachute lives inside a cylinder,

which is fastened with cords and strapped to your back. All you have to do in case the Drachen is set on fire, or shows a disposition to go over to the enemy, is to climb on to the edge of the basket, stand there for a second, and jump over.

For a hundred feet or so you have the sensation of your life. You drop like a stone at an altitude of say 4000 feet. Then with any luck your weight pulls off the lid of the parachute—which is falling less rapidly than you are—its silken folds expand, and you ride the air with a graceful motion, till you touch the solid earth once more. The man who does this sort of thing must have a sound heart, good nerve, and abundant faith; but he must feel every time he does it that he has known the sensation of plunging into eternity.

Nothing on the other hand is easier or more pleasant than the ascent in a Drachen, especially one of the perfected kind we owe to the genius of the French army. Compared with an aeroplane, it is like a sailing ship in calm weather. No engine throbs beside you. It is so still that you might hear the beating of your heart. You are lifted gently above the earth like a bit of thistle-down. Fields, roads, villages, and trees drop away from you, as if withdrawn by an invisible hand. The earth becomes like a piece of shot silk; here and there across it you can trace the winding of a little stream, the glint of a pool touched by the rose of the sun. The squad

of French infantry look like tiny little soldiers of lead, and then you forget their existence. Overhead the brown folds of the Drachen swell like the trunk of a mammoth. A wind blows through the rigging, and the suspension cords float in the air like bits of thread. The operator is busy at his telephone. There is a sudden flame showing where some gun is concealed. The news sweeps swiftly down to the Battery Commander. He trains his weapon on the enemy.

There is a spurt of dust, the flash of an exploding shell—"Fifteen yards to the right." "Right, but your shells are falling short." "Ha! very near that time." "Got him, by God."

That is the sort of thing in outline. We are learning, remember.

This is not a battle. Still we are near the front. Up here in the still and quiet spaces of heaven we can hear very plainly the music of the guns; we can see upon the horizon their lightning flash—and then—over the wires—

"On guard; an enemy's plane is coming towards you."

The corporal, who is eighteen, smiles indulgently—

"Je ne m'occupe pas de tout ça," he says, turning to his pencil and his bit of paper.

"Crash, crash, crash,"—we can see the aeroplane bearing down upon us like an eagle in the sky, with the puffs of red cloud bursting in a circle about him. The Drachen floats on, like a great caterpillar, squidgy, amorphous—a tempting prey. But the guns keep

the Fokker at bay; his reception is too warm; he turns and sweeps back in a wide circle towards the German lines, the clouds pursuing him.

The first stars begin to shine in the sky.

The corporal laughs. "It would be *chic* to have one's girl up here — all to one's self!"

But again it is not all beer and skittles. It is bitter cold up here, and the night-shifts are long and lonely. Upon active service the Drachens are often hit, and the soft bulbous creature set on fire. When this happens it falls for all its

bulk like a drop of flaming wax from a candle. In the aviator's record you will often see the Drachen amongst his trophies. Thus—

"*Sous-Lieutenant N——*"

"*Nombre de ses Victoires; 10 Avions et 2 Drachens.*"

It gives you an uncomfortable sensation to remember this, when you see an avion coming towards you from the enemy's lines with felonious intent. Suppose the parachute don't work? But why suppose anything? In this war it is best to smile like the corporal and go on with your job, whatever it is.

GENERAL JOFFRE.

Before the 1st of August 1914 the name of Joffre was unknown to the world, yet the General was already marked out for the supreme command of the armies of France. We have all heard the story of General Pau, the one-armed soldier of 1870, to whom this post was offered; but chivalry still lives in France, and General Pau said: "No! Joffre is the younger man; you must have him instead of me."

(Wasn't it Outram, the Bayard of India, who made way likewise for the gallant Havelock?)

The choice of General Joffre was also the choice of the French people. Great men do not rise to eminence by chance; and great nations, we believe, are inspired in times of crisis to select the man who best represents the spirit that

is moving amidst them. General Joffre embodied the spirit of France before the War. A great soldier, but pacific; a great man, but a faithful public servant; a General who would fight and endure; but a cautious fighter who would not lead his people into brilliant adventures. France believed in him as England believed in Kitchener. Joseph-Jacques-Césaire Joffre is as sure to-day of his place in the history of the world as Quintus Fabius, the Cunctator, who saved Rome.

It was my privilege recently to be received by the General at his headquarters in France. It was a beautiful place this in which he lived, when he was not engaged upon the very scene of War; so quiet, so imbued with the traditional perfection of France, that it was the last

place in which the layman might expect the commander of a mighty army to be found. But there are many things about this War that the layman does not understand.

There was also an absence of state and ceremonial, which those who understand the temper of this simple man might well have looked for.

A sentry in the blue of the French army, his bayonet fixed, his steel helmet on his head, stood smartly to attention as we turned in at the gate. There was something in his air which seemed to say: "Yes, I know that I stand at the Generalissimo's gate." There is always the making of the Old Guard in the French soldier. The great traditions live on.

It was a small house that rose behind him, embroidered with a crimson creeper, and adjacent to the public road. There was no long avenue of approach. We entered, and passing through some little rooms in which the officers of his personal staff were at work, we came to one that was empty and quiet. It was a very small room, very simply furnished, yet touched with the grace and lightness of the French spirit. Then some one opened a connecting door, and I was shown into the *cabinet de travail*, in which the Generalissimo did his work. At the farther end of it—it is a long narrow room—I saw his familiar massive figure, in a dark-blue uniform, slowly rising from the table to come towards me.

I was struck at once with his shyness, so little to be looked for in the commander of millions of men, so entirely unlike that of the typical Frenchman. It recalled to my mind upon the instant Pierre Loti's impression of a great Indian prince—the Maharana of Udaipur—his possession, as he happily puts it, of a "*certainne forme particulière de timidité que je n'ai jamais rencontrée que chez de très grands seigneurs.*"

Those who know His Highness the Maharana have recognised the fidelity of the picture. General Joffre leaves upon one at the first meeting something of the same impression. The Maharana claims to be descended from the Sun—he lives at the very summit of the Indian pride of race; the General stands for the people of France, yet they have in common this subtle mystery of personality. Perhaps it is that they are both conscious of the great thing for which they stand; perhaps it is that a certain simplicity is at the end of all the panoplies of life, like the ray of white light that comes of manifold colours. The fact remains.

And then the next thing that struck me about the General was his blondness, his slumbrous blue eyes, his yellow hair turning to grey.

After a little while I began to realise that the man before me was not a Frenchman at all. The thing has happened before. Neither was Napoleon. Venezelos, I have heard it said, is not a Greek. Beacons-

field, the pride of the English Tories, was a Jew.

The speech of General Joffre recalls the unmistakable brogue of the Catalan. When the sound of it fell upon my ears, I was back once more in the Eastern Pyrenees. It is odd that this little province of Spanish descent—the Cinderella of the family—should have thrown up a leader of France in her critical hour. In the days of Mazarin its people were passionately opposed to union with the French people. But the French have the art of Assimilation.

As this big man, with the big brow and the calm shy manner, stands talking to me with his arms folded across his breast, the fingers hidden, the thumbs showing—it is his characteristic pose,—one realises that there are depths in his nature, simple as it is, which it might be difficult to sound—something of that mystery we call genius. I suppose that the General himself is unconscious of these depths.

"The Catalan," it has been said, "is like a still pool in the volatile sea of France."

It is of the still pool that General Joffre reminds one.

There are two clearly marked types in that province of the South, that is as far south as Rome—the blonde and the dark. You see the streams flowing side by side in all the little villages of the hills—the Gothic and the Iberian. Who knows what blood has gone in the unwritten past to make this soldier of France?

The General's heart is soft, like that of all those people down there, for his native country. He spoke to me of the Cerdagne as we speak of Kashmir, and as all the Catalans speak of that jewel of the Pyrenees. Far beyond the borders of France, into the Spanish Peninsula, the people recognise him as one of themselves; and I doubt if Paris can be prouder of her Chief than is Barcelona, that thronging and restless city of Spain.

The General is not a talker—he is one of those who listen; but when he speaks it is to the point. Our conversation turned upon the war, and the prevailing note of feeling in Germany.

"Évidemment," he says, "ils ont grand besoin de la paix, mais nous ne pouvons pas leur en accorder beaucoup. Discuter de la paix est inutile. Ils ne sont pas prêts à accepter les seules conditions que nous leur imposerions. Alors, il faut continuer, jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient vraiment battus."

You cannot better express the view of the Allies.

Upon the top of an arm-chair in a corner of this room I caught a glimpse of the General's red képi with its braid of gold. It was put away there carelessly, as a school-boy might drop his cap on coming in from out of doors. The French call him Grand-papa Joffre; it is their way of expressing their confidence and affection; but there is something still of the child in this great Soldier and Marshal of France.

SEN LIS.

In the complex and intricate history of this war, with all its modern embellishments, there is nothing more striking than the way in which, as of olden days, the movements of men have been dictated by the framework of the Earth. It is, I suppose, the last occasion on which this will be so. The Zeppelin and the Aeroplane definitely mark the opening of a new era, and the wars of the twenty-first century will be fought in the uncharted world of the sky.

When our little army fell back before the Vandal hordes at Mons, it found no rest till it had been enabled to place between itself and the headlong rush of the enemy "a line of natural defence," and the history of those mighty days, till the deadlock of the trenches supervened, is the geography of France: of the Oise, the Aisne, the Ourcq, and the Marne; of that Isle of France which is the cradle of the race.

If you look at the map you will see how these rivers bear down upon Paris, the goal of the German armies. The Oise is joined at Compiègne by the Aisne, and at Senlis the great highways from Soissons and Compiègne converge. That is why Senlis, the chosen of kings, has borne the brunt of every invasion directed against Paris from the north; and its fate upon each occasion has been the index of the fate of Paris. In 1870 it was held by the Prussians for thirteen months, and Paris was taken.

In 1914 it was held by them for eight days, and Paris escaped.

But the escape was a reprieve that reached her only in the moment of death. The Prussian infantry entered the beautiful woods of Chantilly, and the Uhlans, their mouths watering with desire, looked upon the city lying at their feet.

It is said that the plan of invasion included a threat to destroy her as the means to an immediate and disastrous peace. It was the fate of Senlis to illustrate to the French people the punishment that awaited their further resistance.

One cannot read the poignant story, as it is told by eyewitnesses to the German occupation, without feeling sure that behind the specious excuses, the cynical regrets, there lay a consistent and determined plan to destroy this little town of the Valois kings.

"The General has decided to make of your city a second Louvain. Not one stone of it shall rest upon another," was the statement made by an officer of his staff. And a second Louvain it would have been had time permitted. As it was, Senlis bears upon her to this day The Mark of the Beast.

Here in a few words is the story of the German occupation.

On the 30th of August the sound of approaching guns was first heard in Senlis. The

British aeroplanes flew over the town; a part of the British staff retreating from Compiègne entered its limits.

Within a few hours they had gone, and Senlis knew that she must face the invader alone. All her citizens who could go had left by train and automobile, with such of their possessions as they could carry into safety. But many remained; and at their head the Mayor, who, with the fidelity of the French official, stayed at his post, as his father had done before him in 1870.

It was the fate of this good and devoted man to die for his native town. The story falls like an old Greek tragedy into the compass of a single day. Early on the 2nd of September the Germans, forcing their way through the forest of Hallate, advanced on Senlis.

The French infantry and guns resisted, and some fighting took place which lasted a couple of hours. The enemy's shells fell within the upper portion of the town, damaging the cathedral and all but destroying its spire. The French then withdrew, the guns ceased firing, and the invader marched into the town.

Upon the steps of the Mairie there stood the Mayor, respectful, devoted, the representative of his people. He was asked if there were any troops still in Senlis. He replied, so far as he knew, that there were none; and assured the General, in reply to the rude and violent questioning to which he was subjected, of the pacific charac-

ter of the inhabitants. There is no question that he spoke the truth. He had been continuously at his desk since the guns had ceased firing, and could indeed know no more than the General himself. He was ordered to prepare a dinner for thirty at the Grand Cerf, and to go with the General to the hotel. This was at a quarter-past three. At half-past three the Germans, advancing in the direction of Paris, were met at the end of the long high street by a fire from the rearguard of the French, who were concealed in the woods and buildings on the outskirts of the lower town. According to the German account, which is discredited by the French, an officer was shot in the Rue de la République before the combat began.

The Germans were furious at this unexpected resistance. An exhibition of "Frightfulness" was at once resolved upon, if indeed it had not already been arranged. Over a hundred houses in the lower town were fired, and the townspeople, who were evidently as much surprised by the reopening of the battle as were the invaders, were seized promiscuously as they were found in the streets, and made to march in front of the advancing troops. Amongst them was a woman with her little granddaughter, who was wounded. It takes a brute to fight behind the cover of a child.

The Mayor and six unfortunate workmen, who were found in the streets, were seized and carried off with other hostages

to a field near the Château of Chamant. During the journey the Mayor was treated with brutal indignity. His gloves were pulled away from him and flung in his face; he was hit over the head with his own cane. At eleven-o'clock, after the General and his staff had dined at the Château and done themselves well on its resources, an officer came up to the Mayor.

"Are you," he said, "the Mayor of Senlis?"

"I am," said Monsieur Odent.

"Monsieur le Maire, you have fired upon, and caused others to fire upon our troops. The penalty is death."

"I have done neither the one nor the other," replied he.

But he spoke to no purpose: for his death had already been resolved upon.

Two years have passed since then, but Senlis still bears upon her the scars of those eight days; and even when they are healed, the memory of the Hun will survive in the records of the old town, and in the hearts of its people. It is not possible to forget such things.

We entered Senlis on a soft autumn day from Chantilly, at the very point where the last fight took place in the lower town on the road to Paris. There is an old hospital there, which is half an almshouse—a legacy from other days. We could see upon its walls the marks of the mitrailleuses, a hole made by a shell, and the spatter of the rifle fire. Within it there were long rows of beds, on which wounded men were

lying, and the Matron told us of the fight that centred here on that September evening. When the first shots were fired, she said, an old pensioner, stricken by curiosity, went out to the little door that opened on the street. He was deliberately shot as he stood there by a German soldier. Inside the hospital we were shown the ward in which the German wounded were cared for by these devoted Frenchwomen.

As we looked up the street, it was clear that it had been systematically fired. The men had entered the town equipped with the instruments of destruction: with tubes containing inflammable spirits, sponges soaked in petrol, and fire-grenades. In addition to using these, they fired at the houses through the windows. In one house that failed to catch fire we could see the glass of the windows in the upper stories shattered by bullets. Many old houses, some that were relics of the fifteenth century, were destroyed in this way. Five hundred are said to have perished. The inhabitants were forced to come out into the open street, into the midst of the hail of bullets, while the combat was still in progress. They were forbidden to take any steps to extinguish the fires or to check them from spreading.

It was strange, in the midst of the general ruin, to see many houses still standing apparently untouched. One was taken and another left. Many that were not burned were sacked.

"Everything," says a citizen,

who entered the house of his friends in their absence, "was methodically overhauled—even to a locket which contained the photograph and a lock of hair of a dead child. It was forced open to gratify a moment's curiosity. Boxes and cupboards were emptied, drawers were forced open, the silver was stolen. In the children's music-room their instruments lay broken and in a heap, after having been used. The Hun likes music. He had danced and sung in the midst of his thieving and of the destruction of this house and its little domestic joys, and as a final legacy he had left behind him in the drawing-room the impious inscription: 'With God, for Emperor and Fatherland.'"

The Cathedral, of which not only Senlis but the whole of France is justly proud, upon which the piety of so many kings was lavished, narrowly escaped destruction. This beautiful old church, of the days of Philip Augustus and of Francis the First, the shrine of centuries, was made the target of the Hun's artillery, fifty shells falling within its precincts and all but unseating its exquisite spire.

He would have burned it too. Almost the first thing he did on entering the town was to force his way into it, on the pretext that it had been used for military purposes.

"I was in my house near the Cathedral," says the Curé, "when I heard a loud hammering on one of the doors of the Sanctuary. The Germans had seized a gargoyle that had

fallen under their fire, and were using it as a ram to force their way in. I went out to them at once, and, perceiving that they wished to go up into the belfry, made a sign that the door was on the other side. The party consisted of six, of whom one was an officer. They covered me with their revolvers, and, the moment the sounds of firing broke out in the lower town, one of them seized me brutally by the shoulder and told me I was his prisoner. I explained to them that I was very willing to open the door, but that I must go into the Vicarage for the key. Two of them escorted me on this errand. On my return with the key I preceded them up the ladder. They followed close upon me, revolvers in hand, insisting that they had been fired on from the tower. This was not only untrue, it was impossible. I alone had been up in the belfry, from which I had observed the earlier phases of the battle, and the key had remained throughout in my possession. When they were able to satisfy themselves that there was not the slightest trace of its having been put to any military use, and that no one was concealed there, they came down again, and the officer saluting me said I was at liberty to return to my quarters. But I was not there very long before I was ordered to appear at the Grand Cerf as a hostage.

"A Colonel whom I met there said: 'The wisest thing you can do, M. le Curé, is to stay where you are, and not to leave these premises. Within

an hour your town will be burnt.'

"'Burnt? Great God, Colonel, is it possible? And why?'

"'Because your people have fired at our troops from the tower of the Cathedral.'"

The Curé, moved by emotion, convinced the Colonel that there was absolutely no truth in this assertion.

"'If that be so,' he replied, 'you have rendered an inestimable service to your town. War has cruel necessities; we do not wish to act with severity. The General has resolved to make another Louvain of Senlis, but I will tell him what you have said, and I shall hope to lighten the rigour of his decision.'"

We know with what result.

The Cathedral was spared for the moment, but who can doubt that it would have shared the fate of Rheims, had the tide of battle not swept Von Kluck and his guns out of reach of Senlis?

Happily it stands untouched, though wounded, in the fulness of its perfection; a beautiful vision as it soars above this town in which Henri Quatre first saw the light; slender and carved, framed in the gold and brown of its chestnut trees, whose foliage lies at this season of the year, like a carpet on the cobbled close, softening the

footfalls of those who pass; a haunt of ancient peace, enriched with memories of the past.

At Chamant, amidst hedges and avenues, and a rural charm that any one who loves an English countryside can imagine for himself, there spreads the field, by a little wood, in which the Mayor and six of his brethren gave up their lives for Senlis. The shallow grave in which he lay, with his feet protruding above the soil—such was their derision of this faithful servant—lies empty now in the turnip-field, his body having been carried into the town; but a marble cross marks the scene of the tragedy.

A little way off the spire of the Cathedral rises high above the trees. It must have been the last thing upon which his eyes rested as the flames of his native town rose up about it into the starry night.

"They brought him here," said my companion, "because it was the nearest convenient spot for a murder."

Of the six others who died with him, one was a lad of seventeen, another an old man nearly seventy years of age: taken haphazard from the streets.

The rest of the hostages lay out in the field all night, in imminent terror of death; they were released at daylight.

ODYSSEUS.

(*To be continued.*)

THE LEFT HAND OF ABDULLA THE BEGGAR.

BY IBN-SABIL.

THE Traveller stood on the upper storey of the caravanserai, lighted his pipe, stretched himself luxuriously, and surveyed the scene about him.

In the little room next to the one which he had selected for himself his servants, seen dimly through a haze of smoke which would have asphyxiated any Western on the spot, were preparing his evening meal. In the square below his muleteers were busy curry-combing their animals, for he had arrived but an hour ago at the little Persian town which was his stage for that day. Other muleteers of other caravans were also busy with their charges. A bunch of camels squatted in one corner chewing the cud and looking around them with supercilious, suspicious eyes. At times one would lay his long neck on the ground and seem to sleep, but soon would raise his head again and resume his interminable chewing. The camel-men—a long-haired, wild-looking crew (“Baluchis, probably,” thought the Traveller)—were seated in a little group near by, round which a *qalyān* (pipe) circulated from hand to hand. Men passed to and fro bearing forage and water, shouting rough jokes or salutations to one another the while, or quarrelling in strident tones on the absorbing subject of

the prices of barley and straw. Always there sounded the merry tinkle of bells as the mules shook their heads or thrust their nozzles deeper into their nose-bags. Sometimes the shrill squeal of a hungry unfed animal cut across the tumult; sometimes the shrill cry for alms from a beggar at the caravanserai gate.

It was a familiar scene to the Traveller, even down to the beggar at the gate, for that is a favourite resort for such gentry: he had seen it at many caravanserais at many different times, but for all that it never lost its fascination for him, and he continued to view it, contentedly puffing at his pipe the while and strolling idly up and down. As in one of his turns he came above the gate, the beggar uttered one of his piercing cries, and the Traveller looked down. The beggar lifted his right arm and pointed to his left leg, and the Traveller saw, with a sense of disgust, somewhat mitigated by a sojourn in those parts of the East where such sights are not too rare, that both lacked their proper complements—the one a hand, the other a foot. By reason of the same sojourn he also guessed how and why the beggar had lost them.

“Poor devil!” he thought

to himself; "a thief. Pilfering, too; a highway robbery and it would have been his head, not his hand. . . . Well," and shrugging his shoulders, that most frequent of gestures with which the West greets the East, he threw the miserable creature below a coin, and continued his perambulations.

Anon came the Deputy-Governor to pay his respects (every Persian town rejoices in—or more often groans under—its Governor, or Deputy-Governor, as the case may be), and the Traveller returned to his room.

The Deputy-Governor proved to be a young man, and also—as was only befitting an official under the Great and Glorious Persian Constitution—a "Young Persian." That is to say, he was very old wine in a very new bottle, his Oriental cosmos standing for the beverage, and a veneer of Occidental ideas for the receptacle. Not that he ever thought of practically applying these ideas either to himself or to his way of life. But there they were—for conversational purposes, and above all for the Press—since, like all "Young Persians," he wrote patriotic and slightly incoherent letters to the slightly incoherent and patriotic Press of his native land. Indeed, like all "Young" reformers, Theory and Talk were his strong points—not Practice. For the rest, he wore a European collar on State occasions, knew a few words of French—such as "Monsieur," "s'il vous plait," and "au revoir," and saved up the proceeds of his bribes and exactions, which were neither

more nor less than those of his unregenerate ancestors, for a trip to Europe—more especially Paris.

Nevertheless, the Traveller, who knew his "Young Persian," and therefore never took him seriously, found this excellent young man excellent company, as indeed nine out of ten Persians are. Like all Deputy-Governors, he liked the wine when it was red—or any other known colour of the rainbow, also Egyptian cigarettes; and the Traveller's saddle-bags were provided with both. So they drank and smoked and chatted, and chatted and drank and smoked, and were soon the best of friends.

The conversation turned on the changes and chances of this mortal life.

"True, there are ups and downs of fortune in all countries," said the Traveller sentimentously; "whom God wills He exalts, and whom He wills He casts down. But never have I seen a country so strange in this respect as your Persia. One day a noble is high in favour with the Shah—may he live for ever—and wears a robe of honour. The next, and he is a rebel with a price on his head. I have passed along a road and have been much delayed owing to its insecurity from a certain robber chief, who would doubtless have stripped me of all that I had, down to my boots, had he caught me. Three months later and the guardianship of this very road has been in the hands of this same robber-chief, who has given me hospitable shelter for the night. One day a muleteer

is the comfortable owner of many camels and mules: a robber raid, and he is a beggar."

The Deputy-Governor wagged his head, now somewhat heavy from the fumes of his potatoes, with great solemnity.

"Bali, bali (ay, ay), a wonderful country Persia, a wonderful country; none like it in the world. And as to beggars—your excellency saw that beggar at the gate of the caravanserai? Yes? Good. Well, one day he was a strong cultivator with a house and some animals of his own. The next—and he was that miserable beggar you see now."

"Indeed," said the Traveller, his curiosity roused, "and how did this occur?"

"My cousin—the Governor of the Province—came through here on his way to Teheran, whence he was going to Paris. He is very fond of Teheran and Paris—is my cousin. He pitched his camp outside the town to stay a few days, and sent out orders for the villagers to bring in provisions. Abdulla, he who is now a beggar, brought in his contribution of barley and straw, laden on donkeys, with the others. My cousin the Prince's Nazir (steward) said that he had not brought in his proper share. Abdulla, instead of, like a wise man, giving the Nazir a few krans to say nothing more about the matter, began to quarrel and abuse him. So the Nazir seized one of Abdulla's donkeys as a fine. Abdulla appealed to the Governor. My cousin refused to listen to him, and made him eat stick into the bargain for giving him trouble.

You know my cousin? He is a very sakht (hard) man."

"No," said the Traveller, "I have not met His Highness, but I have heard of him."

The Traveller did not add that he had heard of him as one of the most tyrannical and corrupt Governors in Persia, which in such a country is something of a tribute in the way of left-handed compliments.

"Ay, w'allah," went on the Deputy-Governor, "he is a sakht man, the Prince, a sakht man, and that fool Abdulla didn't get anything out of him by his appeal except stick. So what must that madman Abdulla do now but try to steal one of the Nazir's donkeys the night before the Prince was to leave. He had nearly got away with the beast too, when just outside the camp it began to bray. This awoke the guards—who, sons of burnt fathers, ought to have been awake already—and they caught Abdulla.

"Next morning Abdulla was brought before my cousin. I was there too, having come to make my khuda-hafiz (farewell) respects. My cousin was very angry, and ordered Abdulla to have his right hand and left foot cut off. As you know, the law of our Prophet—on whom be peace—ordains the severing of hands and feet for theft. I felt pity for the poor wretch, and begged my cousin to show mercy; to make Abdulla eat five hundred sticks instead, for instance, or at any rate to be content with the severing of his hand, and leave him with his two feet whole. But my cousin would not listen to me,

had the butcher¹ out from the town, saw him carry out the sentence, then got on his horse and rode away . . . a hard man, my cousin, very sakht."

The Traveller, too polite to agree openly with this verdict, lit another cigarette, and the Deputy-Governor harked back to the enticing subject of Paris.

"Ah! Monsieur. In sha' Allah (Please God) when next we meet it must be in Paris."

"In sha' Allah," returned the Traveller. "You have not yet been there?"

"No; but my cousin, the Prince, intends going there in the spring, and I will accompany him if I have saved up enough money for the trip."

The Traveller hid a sarcastic smile behind a puff of smoke. The saving up might be the Deputy-Governor's, but the money would certainly belong to other people.

Later the Deputy-Governor rose and took a somewhat unsteady departure, amid much "Khuda - hafizing" and "Au revoir" on both sides; and the Traveller—the room being somewhat over - thick with tobacco fumes—resumed his pacing of the upper storey of the caravanserai, his mind turning on the story of the unlucky beggar. It was typically Persian in its mixture of tragedy and comedy: the unjust steward, the sleeping guards, the braying donkey, the tyrannical Governor, and finally the butcher with his knife. You might smile or you might frown at it; the

Traveller, being something of a philosopher, did both.

It was now evening, and the setting sun cast a glow of colour over the far - off hills, the plain at their foot, across which, from all points of the compass, flocks and herds were being driven in, and the gardens immediately surrounding the town. In the courtyard, at the Traveller's feet, all was at peace and still, and men lay about in attitudes of rest, or squatted round little fires cooking their evening meals, some of the more devout turning to prayer as the call of a Muezzin sounded faintly from a neighbouring mosque.

Built against the outer wall of the caravanserai which adjoined a piece of waste ground such as is often to be found in Persian towns, were a few small huts, wretched erections of reeds and grass, and over one of them—more wretched if possible than its neighbours, and consisting indeed merely of a roofless enclosure—the Traveller chanced to stop.

It was tenanted by a single figure chopping wood; at least that was the Traveller's first impression, and he was about to pass on when a second glance seemed to reveal something curious about that solitary figure and its supposed employment. If it chopped wood it chose a very curious instrument—something long, thin, and pointed; and it also chose to do it with its left hand.

¹ The common executioner in Persia.

The Traveller, as befitted a traveller, owed no light allegiance to the Goddess of Curiosity; and there was certainly something curious about a figure which chopped wood with an instrument long, thin, and pointed, and performed this operation with its left hand. He knelt cautiously down and peered over the edge of the wall; the figure below, intent on its work, never looked up. One—two—three—four,—the Traveller soon lost count of the blows, each of them accompanied by a savage grunt telling of the still more savage energy behind them. But for all their energy no wood seemed to be chopped. Indeed, now that the Traveller could obtain a better view, it appeared that the object of the blows was hardly to chop wood, since each blow was driven straight into the ground.

"Curious—very curious," thought the Traveller. The figure shifted its position slightly, turning its right side towards the Traveller, when the latter saw why it used its left hand,—its right arm had been severed at the wrist.

A thrill of excitement shot through the Traveller, and he continued to watch the figure at its strange employment, while a vague unformed idea of the explanation of the mystery gathered in his mind.

Suddenly he bent down until his face was on the level of the wall's edge.

"Oe', Abdulla," he cried softly, "what are you doing?"

The figure for a second seemed

turned into stone, and remained with uplifted hand, still holding that long, thin, and pointed instrument. The next instant, and the hand had descended to beneath the thighs, concealing what it held, while the head turned this way and that seeking the owner of the voice. Again the Traveller cried softly, and this time the figure located the direction of the voice and looked up.

It was indeed Abdulla the beggar, but with a very different expression on his face to that worn by it when he solicited alms at the caravanseraï gate. Then it expressed nothing but abject servility. Now—and the Traveller could see the face clearly, for the wall was not too high now—with lips savagely drawn back over clenched teeth, it expressed terror and rage—rage so furious that the Traveller felt a little relieved that the height of the wall lay between him and the ground.

Then the face was once more that of the beggar, and the whining tones those with which he solicited alms, and it was the beggar's cry that rose instinctively to his lips.

"Alms, in the name of God; alms, alms."

"What are you doing?" repeated the Traveller.

"Nothing, zenab, nothing. What should I be doing? I am a poor beggar. Alms, alms."

"Oh! you were doing nothing, were you? And shall I tell the Deputy-Governor the nothing you were doing? He might be interested to hear."

Again an expression of terror

swept over the beggar's face. "For God's sake, zenab . . ."

"Good," said the Traveller; "stay where you are and I'll come down and talk to you. If you go away before I come down the Deputy-Governor shall hear of how you amuse yourself in the evenings when you think no one is looking."

Passing his room, the Traveller took occasion to put his pistol into a handy pocket, and then made his way leisurely, and with the air of one taking an evening stroll, out of the caravanseraï and round to where Abdulla was awaiting him, seated in front of his hut.

"Now," said the Traveller, "no tricks; you see this?" and he displayed the pistol.

"By Hazrat Abbas, by your life, I . . ."

"Just so," smiled the Traveller; "it's of my life I'm thinking. Now give ear; if you tell me the truth, you'll come to no harm. And it will be of no benefit to you to tell me lies, because I can guess what you were doing; you were . . ." And the Traveller put his guess into words.

The beggar cowered.

"But this I do not know," went on the Traveller, "why you should do it while it is yet day. You have never been caught before?"

"No, no, zenab; or should I be alive now? It is only Feringhis who walk for pleasure on the walls of caravanserais, instead of resting in their rooms. And it is only Feringhis who take the trouble to pry into other people's affairs. And I got careless—it's all I live for now, and

could not wait for the dark. But after this I will be careful. . . : Yes, yes, all that the Deputy-Governor told you was true. If I had only given a few krans to that son of a burnt father, the Nazir, it would not have happened. And then when I appealed to the Governor—son of a dog, may he roast in hell!—he gave me stick, and I became mad with anger, and tried to steal one of the Nazir's donkeys in exchange for my own that he had robbed me of. And then I was caught, and the Governor had my hand and foot cut off." The beggar shivered, as though once again he felt the knife. "Curse him! Curse him! Curse him!"

"Yewash, yewash" (steady, steady), said the Traveller; "people will hear you."

Again the beggar cowered, and looked around him with terror in his face. But they had the waste ground to themselves.

"Then they put my hand and foot in burning oil, so that I should not bleed to death" (it was the Traveller who shivered now); "but I was like one dead for a long time, and when I came to life wished myself dead once more. What had I to live for? The kud-khuda (headman) of my village had taken my house and my little piece of land, and the Governor's sowars had driven off the two donkeys which were still left to me. And what could I do, a cripple, and one persecuted by the Governor? Should any one wish to oppress me, lo! he had merely to say it was

by the Governor's orders, and the thing was done. No! I had nothing to live for, so I thought at first,—nothing to live for. And then gradually, slowly, I found something to live for—Revenge. Ay, revenge." And the beggar twisted the word in his mouth as though it were sweet to his taste. "But what revenge could there be between a cripple such as myself and a Governor of a province with a thousand sowars at his back, so I thought to myself. And then I thought—but even a Governor has a heart like common folk . . ." The beggar hesitated.

"Yes," went on the Traveller, "a heart like other folk, into which a knife can be driven."

"Ay, into which a knife can be driven," and the words came in a hiss from the beggar's lips. "But I had no knife, and no right hand to wield it. The little that I got from begging just kept me alive. How could I, then, save up enough to buy me a knife, a good strong khanjar (dagger) such as I needed? And if I could have saved up enough to buy one, how could I have avoided suspicion? People would have said, 'What do beggars want with khanjars?' But God is compassionate and merciful, and He helped me."

"How?" prompted the Traveller, though indeed the beggar, his tongue loosened once, seemed to find relief in speech, and needed little prompting to tell his tale.

"A Baluch camel caravan halted in the caravanserai one

night, and I saw that one of the sarwans (camel-men) wore in his waist-belt a khanjar—a good khanjar, sharp and strong. God had sent a fever upon this sarwan, so that he became without sense, and that night slept apart from his fellows. And that night I came and took the khanjar from him."

"He did not wake up?"

"No! God was good to *him* also, and he did not wake up. Then I hid the khanjar in the sand outside the caravanserai. Next morning there was a great shaluk (tumult) over the khanjar, but with all the shaluk the sarwan did not get his khanjar back, and went off fighting and quarrelling with his companions, whom he suspected of being the thieves. But me, the poor cripple of a beggar, he never suspected. Why should he? . . . So now I had my khanjar."

"My right hand was gone, but still there remained my left, and it was with my left that I began to practice. I marked out the figure of a man in the sand yonder in my hut, and every night would strike—strike—strike—sometimes the whole night through. The blows at first were those of a child, but after many nights . . ." The beggar drew a small ring—perhaps an inch in diameter—in the sand in front of him. "At first my blows were like this," and producing the khanjar the beggar struck an awkward nerveless blow, which scarcely sent the tip of the dagger below the surface of the sand, and was far wide of that diminutive circle. "But now," and with a savage grunt, he sent the dagger again and

again up to the haft, piercing the circle at every blow. "That, zenab, is how I strike now."

And the Traveller has never forgotten that picture: the crouching figure of the beggar—half seen, half lost in the gathering gloom—the upturned face working with a wild triumph, and the dagger, its haft still quivering with the furious energy of the last blow, buried in the sand.

"That, zenab, is how I strike now."

"A good blow," quoth the Traveller. "And how long has it taken you to acquire it?"

"God knows. It is long since I could strike the blow, and it was long before I could strike it. Many years have passed since that day when the butcher used his knife, but not a night goes by that I do not use mine—though only in the ground. Sometimes I become without sense, like that sarwan who had the fever, and think I have the Governor before me instead of his image in the sand. Ah! you should see me strike then! But with the dawn my senses return to me, and I perceive it is but an image in the sand, and I weep and hide the khanjar, and go to the caravanserai gate for the day's begging."

There was silence for a moment, then the Traveller spoke.

"What is your plan, then? You will wait here till the Governor happens to pass through?"

"Bali, I will assuredly wait here until he chances to pass through. By daylight I will

mark the place of his tent, by night I will go out to his camp; his guards will be asleep, as they were the night I took that thrice-accursed donkey, and I will creep into his tent, and then . . . There will be no alarm. What alarm should there be, after one such blow as you have just seen? And I will give more than one, be sure of that. Then I will creep out of his tent, and out of the camp. And on the morrow, when the whole town is in a tumult, who will suspect the crippled beggar sitting in his accustomed place at the caravanserai gate?"

"But why do you not go to the Governor, instead of waiting until he should come to you? He lives but two hundred miles from here."

The beggar laughed scornfully.

"Am I, then, a rich Feringhi that I can hire a caravan to take me hither and thither? Since when do charwadars (muleteers) lend their animals for alms, and not for hire? I have not the wherewithal to hire an animal to take me one farsakh, how then two hundred miles? And how can a cripple walk that distance? Moreover, even could I go to the Governor's town, I would find the killing of him twice more difficult there than here. There he would be in his palace, and a palace is not so easy to enter at night as a camp. And could I kill him, suspicion would assuredly fall on me. Crippled beggars do not travel two hundred miles for nothing. No, sahib,

believe me, I have thought of everything, and I will wait here until he comes."

"But supposing he should not come?"

"He *will* come. God is good, and He will send him as He sent that sarwan with the khanjar. Moreover, he will sooner or later set out for Teheran and Feringistan (Europe),—it is long since he made his last visit, and he is fond of Feringistan is the Governor. To reach Teheran he will pass through here, since we are on the main road. Bali, he will come, never fear, on his way to Feringistan; but, In sha' Allah, I will send him on a very different journey."

"Perhaps. But if you are caught, what then?"

"Then? . . . Then I shall die either by the . . . or the . . ." And the beggar, with voice and gesture, graphically outlined two forms of execution fashionable in Persia. It is unnecessary to detail them here, but for the second time that evening the Traveller shivered. Abdulla was exceedingly graphic, more especially in his gestures.

"But that is all *my* risk, *my* affair, zenab. What are you going to do, now that you have heard me?" And the beggar's voice quivered with anxiety, as well it might,

since the Traveller's answer meant life or death to him.

"I?" said the Traveller. "I am going to do nothing."

"May God be good to you, zenab; may He . . ."

"Yes, I will do nothing. As you say, it is not my affair. I could only warn the Governor through his cousin here, who would have you seized and . . . But even if I could warn the Governor without implicating you, I would not do it. In a land where there is no justice the individual must be his own judge, jury, and executioner." He hesitated, being in two minds as to giving the beggar information of the Governor's coming in the spring. Then he decided to refrain. After all, he was a neutral, and a neutral he would remain. "Yes, I will do nothing."

Though the beggar doubtless failed to appreciate the Traveller's philosophical reasons for non-interference, he caught at the conclusion. The Traveller was going to do nothing—it was to be life not death for him, and he renewed his protestations of gratitude.

The Traveller moved away. "We have stayed talking long enough," he said. "My servants will begin to wonder what has happened to me. Khuda hafiz."

"Khuda hafiz," returned the beggar from the darkness.

II.

It was nearly a year later, and the Traveller, returned from the East, was seated in front of a Paris café dividing

his attention between the day's issue of 'Le Temps,' a coffee and liqueur, and the pulsing life of the great city which ran—

as hot blood through a vein—up and down the long street before him.

"It was good," thought the Traveller, laying down the paper and lighting a cigarette, "to be once more at the heart of things, good to be back once more in the West in the full flood of existence, after wanderings in the silent, torpid back-waters of the East. It was good to see swift automobiles, and crowds of white faces, and women unveiled walking free and unashamed, in place of slow-moving beasts of burden, and strange dark-faced crowds, and veiled shuffling women. It was all good, very good." And the Traveller, with a comprehensive gesture of the hand, swept the East into the limbo of the past.

But it was just at this moment that the East came up behind him, tapped him on the shoulder, and said, "Peace be upon you."

The Traveller turned with a start. Such was the association of that familiar Eastern greeting that he half expected to find some figure of the Orient standing behind his chair, but instead saw a dark smirking face, belonging to a body in conventional Western garb, and seemingly a stranger. Yet as the face continued smirking it grew in familiarity.

"You have then forgotten me?" came in Persian from the smirking lips.

The Traveller remembered. It was the Deputy-Governor of that little Persian town where also abode Abdulla the beggar.

Followed hand-shaking, apologies from the Traveller for his non-recognition, more smirks

from the Deputy-Governor, and the two were seated at the Traveller's little table, his *vis-à-vis*, as befitted a civilised "Young Persian," supplied with an absinthe.

"Ah! so you have at last come to Paris," said the Traveller.

The Deputy-Governor assumed a look of extreme waggishness.

"Yes, at last! It is a fine place, Paris. I had heard something about Paris while I was still in Persia, but it is better than I had heard—much better," and he proceeded to give in detail the points in which it excelled his expectations. And these points had nothing whatever to do with the art treasures of the Louvre, for instance, or the architecture of Notre Dame.

The average Englishman is not averse to discussing at times the more intimate sides of the Life of Pleasure, but he does not pursue these discussions with casual acquaintances or with men of another colour than himself, and the Traveller turned the conversation back to the Deputy-Governor's native land.

"My cousin the Governor is dead," said the latter. "I think I mentioned him to you when we last met?"

The Traveller started.

"Dead?"

"Yes; he was killed—stabbed to death one night in his camp. He was on his way to Teheran, where I was to have joined him afterwards to come with him to Paris, and had camped just outside the town—not very far from

that caravanserai in which you stayed. Some scoundrel crept into the camp one night and knifed him to death. I saw his body the next morning, and it was a horrible sight—all his breast and face slashed to pieces."

Paris and the twentieth century straightway fell from the Traveller, and he was back once more in Persia of the Middle Ages, and was talking to Abdulla the beggar beneath the caravanserai wall in the shadow of the coming night. And again that picture rose before his eyes—the crouching figure of the beggar, half seen, half lost in the gathering gloom, the upturned face working with a wild triumph, and the dagger, its haft still quivering with the furious energy of the last blow, buried in the ground. . . .

With a wrench he brought himself back to the present, uttering polite condolences for the untimely end of the Deputy-Governor's cousin.

"And the murderer" (the word hardly expressed his sentiment, but under the circumstances there was none other), "and the murderer was not caught?"

"No; the guards were asleep as usual—the sons of burnt fathers—and the murderer got away without being discovered. There was no clue as to who he was, for of course my cousin was a *sakht* man, as you know, and had many powerful enemies."

The Traveller nodded absently. "Yet," he was think-

ing, "of all those powerful enemies it was only Abdulla the maimed beggar who had had the courage and the address to wreak his just vengeance." And he fell into a muse.

It gave him a pleasant sense of power to think that he had but to say a few words and Abdulla's life would not be worth more purchase than it took a letter to get from Paris to Persia. It titivated his feeling for the dramatic and the bizarre that here in Paris, far removed in time and space as he was from the actual occurrence, he nevertheless held the secret of that dark and blood-stained mystery. It called forth his admiration for the "indomitable soul" in man, that one such fellow-mortal, triumphing over all difficulties, should at the end have come to his self-appointed goal.

He would have given much to have asked whether Abdulla sat at his accustomed place near the caravanserai gate calling for alms, but feared to arouse suspicions.

The Deputy-Governor broke in on his thoughts.

"Oh, mon ami, your glass is empty. You will have another? Bon! Garçon!"

When his liqueur was brought the Traveller lifted his glass.

"A votre santé," he said, and the Deputy-Governor bowed and sipped his poison. But in his heart the Traveller drank a different toast to one Abdulla, crippled beggar, who had dealt justice to the governor of a province with a thousand men at his back.

WALTER GREENWAY, HERO.

BY ROBERT HOLMES,

A POLICE COURT MISSIONARY AND PROBATION OFFICER ;
AUTHOR OF 'WALTER GREENWAY, SPY, AND OTHERS, SOMETIME CRIMINAL.'

IF Walter Greenway thought that British folk would admire his pluck when he told the story of his service as a spy, printed in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for June 1916, he was right. But he went wrong in imagining that any mortal's nose would turn up regarding the Arab wife he worshipped. His letter had scarcely been read in my house, when my wife and her friends were busy wondering what tokens of affection and esteem they could send to a dark-skinned sister, whose heroic patriotism and pureness of soul her husband so well described, and to the children of whom he was so proud. A parcel went off in April to a queer address near Mosha, given in his last letter—an address which did not stimulate great confidence in the delivery of anything sent to it. Absence of news of the fate of that small consignment had awakened some anxiety, when several readers of 'Maga' generously wrote to me, offering to repeat what my wife and her friends had done. It seemed unsafe to risk more parcels without better hope of the address than I had come to entertain. A more pleasing matter was the strong testimony I had on every hand of the pride and affection which

people felt for Walter and his family. That a few here and there regarded his story as too strange to be true only heightened my delight. I knew how he would have enjoyed their unbelief.

There was no response to a letter I sent him when forwarding the June number of 'Blackwood.' I had set him down as dead from the results of that torture and privation he had told about, when, in the middle of October, a package of botanical specimens reached me, evidently the gift of some friend abroad.

I have a good many friends abroad just now. Some of them credit me with hobbies and attainments to which I cannot lay the least claim. There is one who mistakenly thinks I care about beetles, another who has got it into his head that I dote on spiders, and a third that I am learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians and adore mummies. As I care about as much for the study of botany as of beetles or spiders or mummies, my gratitude at being remembered was greater than my interest in the botanical specimens the postman brought me.

Neither writing on label nor postmark were illuminating. Opening the package, I found

it to consist of coarse grasses, surrounding a single stalk of a plant of the orchid tribe, the closed dry leaf of which might hide a flower. As a matter of fact it hid fragments of paper rolled into pellets, which I have smoothed out, and from which I have laboriously pieced together three distinct letters, all full of further news of Greenway, all jumbled up when they came into my hands, and all legible only with difficulty in many parts. I have made the best I can of them, and I believe my version represents what he wrote, if not quite, at least tolerably accurately.

The letters speak for themselves. There is no need for me to say that any further botanical specimens from the East would have my closest attention. Alas, Walter will send me no more!

Here is the letter written first, and dated April 10, 1916:—

"That Bedouin mute I told you about—he *had* a job to get home. The windows of heaven were open day and night. He toiled and waded, slipped and slurred, through mud-bottomed lagoons and miry sloughs. Dysentery returned. He struggled along on hand and knees till strength gave out, and he was compelled to wriggle along like a snake, groaning in the morning, 'Would Allah it were even!' and at even, 'Would Allah it were morning!' from sorrow of heart.

"His pace, when he crawled out of the region of perpetual rain, was the pace of a snail.

Now, frost by night and a scorching sun by day only varied his misery. Most men would have prayed to die, but not he. Soft, beautiful brown eyes, blazing with love, peered beseechingly into his own through all. He pressed on, though it cost him excruciating torture. He was determined to kiss again the sweet brown face those eyes were set in. He would feel once more the rapture of those soft delicious cheeks laid upon his own. The music of children's voices stirred him to tears. Fancy must be clothed in reality. He would not die till once again those darling heads had nestled their curls upon his breast, and once again those sweetest lips had breathed into his ears the magic word father.

"He reached Basra more dead than alive, where by the grace of Allah he met his father-in-law, whose ship made sail for Mocha within two days, calling at Aden late in March. Better than he felt at Basra, but still weak and ill, he set out instantly for his home, coming up to the fringe of date-palms in front of his little place one evening as the sun sank. Resting as much from lack of strength as lack of light, he waited for moonrise, then crawled through the trees, weariness all gone from ecstacy at getting home, which even gave him energy to rise to his feet and run a few paces. But the sight which met his gaze made him cry out in terror. A heap of ashes were where

his dwelling-place had been. Instinct told him what had chanced. The enemy had discovered and avenged his service to Britain, firing his home and harrying his crops. Where, where were wife and children? Had the destroyers come by night while they slept? Did their dear bones mingle with those silent ashes?

"Down he went like the most ancient of human sufferers upon his heap of ashes in an agony of grief. Surely he had died of a broken heart, but merciful nature, refusing to endure more, wrapped him in a swoon. He woke presently in drowsy fashion. A tender arm supported his head. A gentle voice coaxed him. He swallowed a preparation of arrowroot. His eyes were opened. He recognised his angel of deliverance. Sitting beside him, holding his head upon her breast, her face now gazing upward in devout thanksgiving, now cast down to sprinkle his own with tears falling from those wondrous eyes, her soft arms clasped about him as they might have clasped a little child, was she whose spirit had accompanied him in all his wanderings—his precious, lovely, womanly wife.

"She would not let him speak a word. The children were at hand, she told him, safe and well. He was very poorly, and must rest. Desiring no more, he let her cover him with rugs, and sank to sleep in her arms. Afterwards they carried him by easy stages to her father's

place, miles away, where health and strength came back.

"Turks, they told him when he could bear it, had swooped down from the north—horsemen, fifty strong. By the mercy of Allah, his wife, working in the field at noon-day, her babies with her, was warned of her danger by the burning house to flee into the wilderness. When she went back to the place at night everything was destroyed or taken—house, plantation, coffee crop—all they had. She took refuge with a neighbouring Arab woman, sending her babies to her mother, whilst herself awaiting her husband's return.

"She was weighed down at first by a feeling that somewhere he suffered torture either from disease or man. Then it was shown her in a dream that, maimed, broken, now reeling from weakness like a drunken man, now creeping on his belly like a snake, he toiled towards her, and her soul revived. Thenceforward she slept not night nor day. Cordials and arrowroot were at her hand in readiness for the hour of his coming. She watched and waited three whole weeks, only leaving the ashes of what was once her home for scanty refreshment between sunset and moonrise. Had he delayed his exit from the palm-trees but a few seconds, he would have been spared much. She must have found his senseless form within a very little while of his fainting away.

"It was well for him she

waited thus. Otherwise he had surely perished. Never had man sweeter angel for wife. May her joy be infinite, here and in a better world!

"And praise be to Allah for His gift of little children! Surely their laughter and their song are His own charms for giving back to a fainting man the youth and buoyancy which else were clean gone from him! He wakes from a doze: the dark-eyed little Iza stands beside his couch with folded hands and grave face till she sees him smile. Then she stoops, presses a kiss upon his lips, and, mindful of a mother's counsel, waves a hand and steps lightly away. The lingering incense of her breath comforts him. His gladness grows the greater for the swell of joy which rises from sister and brother at Iza's good tidings of father's recovery.

"In a little while he is conscious of another kitten's presence. The stately Victoria has arrived with stealthy step, bent upon confirming with her fawn-like eyes the news her sister has brought. 'Kiss me, my love,' he beseeches. She touches his own with lips of bewitching sweetness, strokes his cheeks lovingly, and then, with all the authority conferred by six years' experience of life, goes out to gravely announce that father is nearly better.

"He dozes off for a few minutes. A shy little brown dog trots in to gaze with

infinite pity upon his thin worn face. He opens his eyes and smiles. The little dog finds a British tongue. 'Is 'ou better, fader?' he inquires, then turns longing eyes upon a penknife which father has asked for, thinking to sharpen a pencil, and forgetting a missing arm! 'Give father a kiss, Walter,' he murmurs; 'you can have the knife, but don't cut yourself,' and it is a merry little dog that runs off.

"Pity the poor mute struggling maimed and weary on his homeward way. Pity his moment of bitterest agony when eyes fall on ruined home. After that let pity turn to envy if you will. That is the one passion there seems room for here!

"I lie in the shade of palm-trees. Running water is in sight from my hammock. Already, after three weeks with wife and bairns, I feel a man again. The dysentery is gone. There is still an occasional painful throbbing where my left arm once was, but only a memory of those horrible burnings and their deep scars remain. Sometimes I fancy I shall get in another day for England before all is done. The goodness of Allah gives me new life and spirit every hour, as my wife truly says; but she fails to explain that if I have the pluck to do anything more, it will be because Allah gives it through herself and our little ones. It is they who fill my heart with happiness to-day.

"I suppose I write because

of pride and gladness, for I have no notion when I shall be able to send this letter. Not that it matters. It is a whim I have just now—to tell you what a fortunate fellow I am. It will do me no good for you to know, and you no harm not to know. Still, I wish you could see my family circle. You have a kind heart. My joy seems too much for one. I wish you could share it ‘for auld lang syne.’ Good-bye.”

It was long before that letter was sent. He forgot it when an opportunity for posting came, then for a while he had matters to think about so important as probably to drive all thoughts of correspondence from his mind. He dismisses the oversight when in Aden very airily in the letter following. If that first letter had been sent when it might have been, I should have been spared a good deal of perplexing labour sorting out its fragments from those with which it was mixed when it did eventually come to hand. It was quite a task, indeed, to separate it from one dated April 20, and written in a rather firmer hand:—

“My Bedouin mute is himself again, thanks be to Allah. Like me in looks, and circumstanced like me, he gives signs of learning all my old tricks. He was at Aden yesterday. His wife and children were throng in a bazaar. I noticed his eyes fixed affectionately on a fall-pipe attached to a par-

ticularly tall building. He walked up to it. His hand darted out. In a moment he had dragged his feet a yard off the ground. Then he cast a mournful glance at his left side where the missing arm once was. He looked like giving up the job. But the terrified mewling of a too venturesome kitten, whom ambition had landed on a height so dizzy as to temporarily turn her brain, encouraged him upward on an errand of rescue. Spite of missing left arm, he scaled that fall-pipe in forty seconds by the clock. Laying hold on pussy, he placed her in his bosom, bringing her safely to the ground.

“Quite a crowd, mostly Arab, but with a sprinkling of white folk, had gathered to witness the performance. He noticed four especially, whose blanched faces had followed his every movement with breathless interest—his wife and children, called out of the bazaar by the magnetism of a crowd. But if he had eyes for only them, he had ears for others. I think you know that my mute is not really deaf. He had heard the German tongue spoken. He thought it musical, or something. Sometimes excitement lends new tones to men’s voices; and two white men, whom the Arabs thought to be British, spoke in the German tongue of the folly of risking life to save a cat—spoke so uncharitably of my mute’s intellect that it hurt him.

“Yet, entranced by some

quality of their speech, he signed to wife and children to complete purchases in the bazaar, interrupted by his climbing performance, himself hurrying after those Britons whose speech was German when they grew excited. They went to an unfrequented lane in earnest conversation, walking slowly. He passed them near a warehouse, in front of which he halted, for it was noonday.

"A devout believer, he spread his mat and began his devotions. Those Huns coming up, found him in their path and kicked him, defiling his mat with infidel feet. He heeded not their insults, so ignoring his presence they talked in German of many things not understood by guileless children of the desert.

"They went their way. He marked that way. Perhaps his heart burned to avenge the insult Kultur had offered his Faith. At dead of night he was back at that spot. They had spoken of clocks which Arabs were to be hired to put aboard British vessels—amongst the coal. He reached an upper window as easily as he had reached that kitten. The darkness troubled him not at all.

"It was a ticklish job he had to do inside. When he had descended to the basement, seeking clocks and finding none, through several floors, he all but stumbled into an apartment occupied by the very infidel pair he was interested in. He held his breath and crept back into the shadows to listen

to a tale concerning a great arsenal the Turks had filled with German munitions near Baghdad. They used the language of Kultur, it seemed, when alone together and not excited. It was evident they were German officers serving the Fatherland disguised as traders.

"One told of orders he had for the Turkish commander of that arsenal at Baghdad, whither he was proceeding after distributing his store of clocks amongst British shipping, as had been arranged in earlier conversation. He seemed proud of his rank, and showed a gaudy uniform, at sight of which my mute's eyes shone again. The officer being a small man for a German, it struck my mute that the uniform was his own fit. He is a determined person, also very vain, and fond of fine clothes. That uniform was as good as his. His eyes followed it when its German owner placed it back in a tin box and put it into a cupboard. He had already seen a case of clocks near by, and decided to save British lives. It only remained for the Huns to depart without seeing him, which they did presently, though they came so close to him as they went, and chanced to stand so long conversing, that his forehead was dripping with perspiration, so imminent and unavoidable appeared his discovery.

"It was a heavy case of boxes of clocks—so heavy that he could not move it alone, and it took him an hour to open it with poor tools and one arm.

Then he undid the warehouse door by means of a curious use he learnt to put a knife to, making it quite a good key, and carried the boxes, one by one, carefully outside, for fear of accidents, returning last of all for the uniform, which he bore tenderly away. In half an hour he was back with four Arab boatmen of his father-in-law's tribe, who carried the goods to a trading vessel lying in the harbour.

"As for me, I rejoiced when I knew all the tale. It told me that my Bedouin brother had quite got over that sickness which threatened to be his death. The devotion of wife and children had worked the miracle within four weeks of his sad home-coming. I cannot tell you how thankful I felt.

"I longed to imitate his airy journey next morning, as I looked upon the scene at break of day, viewing that warehouse from the quiet lane. There was no kitten aloft, but a fascinating little window, which positively beckoned me. If it were only dark! Then I might live again one more thrilling hour of my old life. It was not dark. It was glorious sunrise. Moreover, my wife was there. She tugged at my outlandish dress (as those who knew me years ago would designate my Arab costume), seeking to lead me from temptation. She had no notion of allowing me to repeat the Bedouin's performance, of which she had seen more than enough. She is a good wife, but unenterprising. Like an English policeman, she is unreasonably opposed to the ex-

ercise of talent by men of lofty ambition; also, like those clowns in your own police cells, but who are not half as quick-witted, she has ways of overcoming one so simple as me. Being docile, I yielded.

"Yet it was good to hear my boy talking of my brother's performance—wish he could 'climb up a high wall like dat.' He inherits some of his father's devilment. I suppose it is natural for me to love him all the more on that account.

"My wife's father panted to be gone. One last look, and all buildings high enough to be attractive vanished from my vision. We are on a trading voyage. In less than a month we hope to reach Basra, the place into which my Bedouin mute crawled half-dead eight weeks ago.

"I have reasons for wishing to reach that spot. I owe something to the men who fired my brother's home. They told lies about what he did to their detriment. They said he did his spying because he is a recreant follower of the Prophet. I know, and you know, it was because he is a loyal subject of King George. They said he got kind treatment from them and abused their charity. I say nothing of the tests they put him through. They were rough, but all in the game, and fair as things go. But they had no business to burn his place. I resent that. They had done enough before to settle any debt he could possibly owe them. I can walk straight to those responsible for so miser-

ably overdoing the vengeance business, and I shall one day. I have information, and I shall use it. Turks are liars by nature, but they shall pay for lies told about my brother, also for needless cruelties done to his family.

"There is another job to be tackled first, though. I like a bit of sport, and feel game for anything now. I am going right into the jaws of the enemy. If I win, I will tell you. If I lose, I fear I shall not be able.

"I am writing now on the off-chance of getting this letter posted with one I wrote earlier, forgotten when in Aden. I am alone for a moment, dreaming of Britain, and chafing to be doing something for my country. Allah would seem to be giving me one more chance. News of that arsenal up the Tigris has set me off again. I hope a little plan I have made will work, sir. Good-night."

When my piecing of bits together gave me this letter complete, I was glad that Walter had not sent the account of his adventures in serial form. It was interesting work putting together the scraps constituting the last chapter he wrote, and dated August 6, 1916.

"I am writing under difficulties. To-day at noon a messenger brought a parcel sent all the way from England. What gladness! Wife and children left work to see it opened. The string was strong, and my knife a poor

thing. My hand trembled. It took quite a while to get the parcel undone. Tell your wife and the other kind ladies they little dreamt what joy they were giving when they filled that parcel.

"The two little ladies (dolls) who came with a message of love 'to the daughters of a British hero'—a scamp like me a hero: fancy that!—I cannot picture the welcome my little girls are giving them. They never saw any dolls before. How they hug them and kiss them, stroking their dark-brown hair, and going into ecstasies over fair white faces, beautiful eyes, heads that will turn, and arms and legs that will move! The picture-book, just the thing for a boy, and the four-bladed knife, which will be just the thing also when father has blunted the blades a bit—Walter is silent for once: rapture has stricken him dumb. He can but gaze at his treasures in wonderment. The beautiful scarf and jacket and apron; the handsome bead necklaces; the lovely cambric handkerchiefs, all so tastefully arranged in that charming little basket, and all made priceless by the fact that Englishwomen do not disdain to send expressions and tokens of love to my darling wife, whose heroism is of a far higher order than that of her husband, miscalled a hero—I thank the senders from the bottom of my heart. The chocolates, too, and other sweetmeats will give gladness here for many a day.

"Then 'Maga,' as my father

used to call it, came with the parcel also, though I see it was posted two months later. I have read what you say of my Bedouin mute. He didn't do badly, poor beggar. And you are to be congratulated, sir, on your patience in putting the scraps together. I had to tear the letters up. I have only a poor opinion of some of the messengers one has to use here. They will pry into things which are no business of theirs, and some of them have knowledge surprising in simple, ignorant Arabs. Sometimes they talk about what they see where they shouldn't meddle. I have only one arm left now. I am ridiculously anxious to keep that.

"The covers of 'Blackwood' bring far-away days back. I close my eyes—I am at home again—a youth of eighteen, fresh from school, the idol of the best of fathers, the dearest of mothers, and the gentlest of sisters. I have done well at school. Everybody is overjoyed. I am being given a start I am proud of in the office of an important company. My new life begins on the Monday following that Saturday night I see again as it were yesterday.

"It is winter. A big fire glows in the old-fashioned grate. What a cosy room it is, to be sure! Victoria, my only sister, sits at the table beside me. She is making bandages for use in some medical mission hospital; I dive in the hamper at her feet, and take out three or four pretty little dolls, tastefully

dressed to give pleasure to infant patients. Mother sits in the chimney corner, knitting scarves, also for the mission-field. Opposite her, reading 'Blackwood,' is my father, silent and happy.

"We'll have such lovely walks when you're home for week-ends, Walter,' my sister whispers; 'now that Christmas is over, the primroses will soon be here.'

"I know what she is thinking of, and I know she'll gather no more primroses. My heart aches and my throat chokes. I cannot answer her. She knows she is not strong. They told her that, very kindly, when they said that the Master had need of her work, done at home. She was not for foreign service. It would only spoil her usefulness to send her to a distant land with a climate she could not stand. She has no notion of consumption; but that is what it is.

"Her distressing cough seizes her, making her forget to notice that I can't talk about primroses. I see my father lay 'Maga' on his knee, and look gravely into her face, while mother pretends not to be alarmed, going on with her knitting steadily. Ah! before those primroses come again she lies beneath. I see them now, as I planted them, blooming over and making sweet her resting-place.

"Perhaps it is because I am nearly come to the hour when, hand in hand, we shall walk once more in green fields bathed in sunshine and rich

with flowers, that I think of my sister again; perhaps it is little Victoria's cough — her aunt's cough; perhaps the dolls; perhaps 'Maga.' I am growing melancholy. Strange, I must shake myself. I ought to be proud and glad; for I have another tale to tell of my Bedouin brother. But I am too weary to tell it to-day.

"August 7.

"Now I feel a bit more myself, I will tell you of my Bedouin. He left his family at the mouth of Shat-el-Arab, going up to Basra in a boat his father-in-law (an Arab with an English heart) purchased from a British officer two months before war broke out. His idea was to test the possibility of firing that enemy munition store near Baghdad. Fortunately the uniform he procured at Aden contained in a pocket a map with the place well marked on it. If he could destroy the arsenal, what glorious revenge for all his troubles!

"His objective lay three hundred miles up the Tigris. If the motor worked all right he would do the journey easily. He knew something of obstacles placed in the river from the conversation of the German officers, and more before certain Arabs pocketed rewards. But that ignorance of mechanics you would expect in a Bedouin got on his nerves. If that motor broke down he was done. How could he propel himself up the river in his maimed state if the engine went wrong?

"As things turned out, the motor, London made, and sound as a bell — its owner must have sold it for the old song he did because tired of a toy — worked beautifully. It was something over which he had no control which caused the trouble. Like the patriarch Jacob, he cried, 'In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night.' He dared not approach the shore. A target for every fool with a gun, while he himself found plenty to do, shooting his craft past obstacles in the river, he darted on, or hid behind friendly shelter as occasion served, till, faint and shivering with cold, the welcome sun, rising on the seventh morning from Basra, revealed the bunches of date-palms and the minarets and domes of Baghdad.

"He had gone too far, but there was no sense in turning back. Steering for a palm-grove by the water-side, he made fast his boat, then roused the sleepers in a hut close at hand.

"No longer mute, he bade them obey the powerful but disguised German officer confronting them, showing the uniform under his cloak and pointing to his, to their eyes, strange and wonderful craft. They unquestioningly accepted his claims, hurrying to provide bearers for the stuff he had brought. Lying serenely in more senses than one, he was conveyed with his goods inside the very gates of the arsenal he sought, some miles lower down the river.

"Marching to the Turkish colonel in charge, he was received with true oriental courtesy, but little real favour. A few German junior officers who hung about enabled him to demonstrate his importance. They were suspicious at first. It was fortunate he remembered German tastes and had brought strong drink with him. By nightfall he was master there. None, he knew, would dare to disobey certain directions he gave for the safe-keeping of his additions to the stores. He was not disappointed when he paid a visit of inspection at eight o'clock. The day had passed pleasantly. His clocks were wound up and going beautifully, and the guard slept off their liquor. He betook himself to Baghdad for an hour or two, as he said, on urgent business.

"About midnight the arsenal blew up with a tremendous roar which shook the earth, whilst flames ascended hundreds of yards to illuminate an inky sky. He heard and felt and saw from his boat as he tore down the river. 'Alas,' he murmured, 'alas for the Faithful who trusted a German! Surely there be few of them left. Those clocks worked well.'

"Rejoining his family at Basra, and finding his father-in-law's business done in that region, he agreed to accompany them back to Mocha, where, indeed, he longed to be. By the last week in July he was ready for work again.

"He pledged a band of Arabs, friends of his father-in-law, by inviolable oaths to follow him to the death, on the one condition that all plunder taken from those marauding Turks who had destroyed his home should be theirs alone. They came up with the enemy in the night of the 30th-31st July. The hirelings earned their wages to the full. They led off seventy captured horses laden with booty as the day broke. The Turks who did him injury were no more. Moreover, divers plans they had been instructed in by Huns perished with them.

"He was back at Mocha by nightfall on the 2nd August, rejoining his family, happy save for the accursed dysentery which returned with redoubled severity. Nothing stays it. I write feeling that his recovery is doubtful indeed.

"Well, I have nothing to grumble at. I have had my innings. Would to God I had health and strength for sake of wife and bairns! Still, her father is good, and she is an angel. If I must go, she will be both father and mother to our children, till all rejoin me in a world where, I believe, those who are kind and loving, loyal and true, in whose heart is set the mark of the spirit of a merciful and forgiving God, must surely meet in peace and bliss. From the silence of that mysterious world to come I think I hear whispering voices long still, as once they sounded within walls where 'Maga's' pages were read,

dolls dressed, bandages made, and scarves knitted—and they seem to whisper as men whisper when a soul is passing.

"It is a solemn feeling I have. None are far away. Time is nothing and distance nothing. You are thousands of miles away, but I see and hear you clearly. I have not been what I might. Also I have been misunderstood somewhat. There is One I do not fear to meet, now—once I did; but that is past—'For His mercy endureth for ever.' What seemed senseless reiteration once, in that psalm of many verses all ending with those words, is blessed reiteration to-night.

"August 8.

"Weaker, but not a bit anxious. How many millions have felt as I feel, looking death in the face! The deaf-mute in the Turkish trenches, also the German officer in the arsenal at Baghdad, felt as I feel now. I suppose it is common for men to face Death calmly, only we do not realise that till he approaches. If wife and children could accompany me I should be perfectly happy. Yet it comes to me that I need not fear for them. I hope you will get what I am writing—in great weariness,—I fainted last night as I wrote. It is pleasant to talk, as it were, to a friend who feels as I do of dear old England. Ah, she will rule the waves for ages yet, thanks be to God. It is good to feel that, and makes one proud and happy. I have a plan for getting this through. Botani-

cal specimens are not examined very closely, I understand.

"August 9.

"Utterly prostrate. Father-in-law taking little ones to his own place when he has lifted me on a horse my wife leads, seeking medical aid for me. I write lying on the ground. Thank you for many a kindness, and your wife and her friends for remembrances which my wife and children will cherish for ever. Good-bye. My father-in-law may get what I have written through, somehow."

How that devoted wife fared on her errand of love is told in a letter kindly sent me at Walter's request by a doctor at a mission hospital. Her letter, dated August 28, runs:—

"A fortnight yesterday an Arab woman brought her husband, an Englishman, to this hospital. He was suffering from acute dysentery, from which he died on August 26. . . . He had lost an arm recently, and his body was badly scarred by burnings. His wife, whose English is very imperfect, made us understand that he had served for some twelve months with the British Forces in Mesopotamia.

"She had a letter which you had written to her husband, but she showed it me so jealously that I was unable to make much of it. It was evident the poor creature prized it too highly to let it leave her hands. As far as I could make out, it told of toys or dolls sent

out for their children, and it might include a reference to a necklace or apron, or ribbons—all of which she wore, and kept perpetually fingering, with great pride and gratitude, whilst she allowed me to glance at the letter. No doubt, though, she intended me to thank you for gifts to the children, if not for the things she kept fingering.

"I am dreadfully sorry for the little woman—very pretty and refined for an Arab. She was devoted to her husband: she must have been: for she carried him somehow, since he was far too weak to walk, or to sit on horseback (at best she must have held him on a horse) for more than seventy miles. She was the picture of despair when he died, and for eighteen hours she mourned at his grave. It quite affected and saddened us all to see her grief. A few hours ago her father, an Arab sheikh, who seems to have conveyed the children to his own home, came and took her away. She thanked us with tears for what we had done for her husband—little enough—then ran to the graveyard, and her father had a hard task to coax her away."

"Be so good as to let me know if this reaches you," was the conclusion, a request I made haste to observe, at the same time asking if my compassionate correspondent could tell me further news of Walter's wife. It went to my heart to picture the affectionate creature's grief, and I longed

to get into touch with her, so as to show her that British people have nothing but admiration for her husband, and extend the warmest sympathy to herself and her children in their bereavement.

A letter sent at once in reply tells me how inquiries were carefully made within a few days of the poor woman's departure with her father, the hospital people being keenly interested. They found that the sheikh had disposed of property he formerly owned in the neighbourhood of Mocha, and was gone with his family, including Walter's wife and children, on a long voyage, as he frequently did; but the disposal of his property made them feel that he intended making his home on land in some other place.

The doctor's unconscious corroboration is valuable as going far to prove Walter's veracity when he wrote of an arm lost and scars gained in serving England at fearful risk. Even more valuable is strong corroboration of a portion of his more amazing tale of an expedition up the Tigris in a motor-boat, with all that went before and followed after, contained in a letter sent to me last Christmas by the captain who first took Walter out to sea, and who wrote in complete ignorance of anything I have written concerning him. After thanking me for a copy of 'My Police Court Friends with the Colours,' which had lain at his lodging fourteen months before he put into Cardiff to claim it, he proceeds:—

"That reminds me. I saw Black Walt¹ last April. You remember him. He deserted ship at Colombo after a year's good service. That was in the summer of 1908, and I saw him again for the first time when we ran alongside an Arab dhow clearing out of Aden, in April, as I have said. He was on deck, messing about with a ramshackle old motor-boat, which he was trying to tinker up. I should never have known him, but he hailed me in his old style.

"I asked him what game he was up to in the Bedouin dress he was wearing. 'Oh,' he said, 'I've settled here; I'm one of the family.' 'And what's happened to your arm?' I said, seeing his left sleeve empty. 'Ask the Turks,' says he, laughing; 'it came off through trying to do a bit for England.' 'How?' I asked. 'Never mind how,' said he. 'And where are you off now?' I said. 'Basra,' says he, 'trading.' 'Trading what?' I said. 'Mechanical toys and officers' uniforms and liquors and what not,' says he. 'I daresay,' I said; 'them's likely goods for Basra.' 'They're all right,' he says; 'my little cargo's wanted up that way very bad;' and he gave me a wink with those merry eyes of his, all full of devilment, and went off on the dhow.

"I wonder what he's been after all this time, and how he

lost that arm, and what he'd got up his sleeve when I met him. Do you ever hear from him? He was always a funny joker. I'll bet anything he's a rum tale to tell."

With this interesting evidence of his whereabouts, possessions, and intentions in April 1916, I fear his story must end, for a missionary friend to whom I wrote last July, when I grew anxious for news of my hero, replies that he could find no trace of him. He reached the district Walter once occupied, but found only desolation from a fire, which he was told was the work of marauding Turks. As for the man he sought, if the Arabs knew anything of him they would not tell. Being thus unsuccessful about the English husband, I fear he will learn little, whatever happens, about the Arab wife.

But Walter has painted a picture of her which will last. He was a strange person, a hero if ever man deserved the term—how far a hero because of the wife he so fortunately met it would be difficult to estimate. That he was a good man at last, for all his early faults, I have no difficulty in understanding through her of whom he was so justly proud, and the children also so lovingly entwined about his heart.

¹ "A small, lithe, pleasant-faced, swarthy-complexioned, active-looking fellow."
— 'Walter Greenway, Spy, and Others, sometime Criminal,' page 241.

THE TALE OF A CASUALTY CLEARING STATION.

BY A ROYAL FIELD LEECH.

CHAPTER XI.—THE AFTERMATH OF BATTLE.

It was a delightful spring evening. Here and there against the crimson of the sky a series of tiny white cloudlets, amidst which an aeroplane flaunted homewards after its day's reconnaissance, proclaiming the presence of enemy anti-aircraft guns. The occasional distant boom of a gun accentuated the calm serenity of the courtyard. In the old-world garden of the chateau a couple of Nursing Sisters sauntered in quiet retirement. The eddying stream encircling the grounds gurgled merrily behind the garden wall. The click of farmyard wheels on the road running meadowwards, the lowing of cows, and the chatter of children birds'-nesting, preached peace. Peafowl on the chateau balustrade shrieked shrilly to each other; the cackle of the pond and the lazy flapping of a swan's wings echoed fitfully on the still air. Surely rumours of imminent war, of a great battle, bloody, epoch-making, were but myths!

The Boy, sauntering along the stream in admiration of budding verdure, drifted into a farmyard. The sight of geese reminded him of his duties as mess caterer. Ration bully beef grows wearisome. A buxom woman, with her young daughters smiling a

welcome, listened to his doubtful French. There, amongst half a hundred hens, waddled a fat white goose. A bargain must be struck and the deed would be done.

In a moment the farmyard was in an uproar. The three women rushing, with yells of encouragement to each other amidst the ducks and hens and geese, pursued their prey. The goose dodged valiantly. The Boy was enjoying himself thoroughly. In the end the goose was captured.

But the real end was not yet. In the kitchen sat an old grandmother, chair-ridden, spectacled, and wrinkled with the furrows of uncountable years. She, it appeared, was still in command. Into her outstretched arms was placed the wildly struggling bird. With eyes tight shut and spectacles knocked about by the animal's flapping wings, she deftly poised the victim, and then gave her decision: "Eight pounds! One franc a pound."

The Boy closed instantly.

Florry, having hungered for architecture, was returning home from a church hunt in the cool of the evening. Porteous, with a dictionary, laboured at perfecting his knowledge of the French language. It helped him to forget things.

The hospital buildings were almost empty of patients. There was no work. Master's preparatory orders, however, had been explicit and had been obeyed. He and Mackenzie were once more in converse.

The Quartermaster's store in the stables was visited. Were there food and hospital comforts for at least a thousand? Was equipment ready to hand for the immediate arrangement of improvised ambulance trains if a rush came?

Upstairs, in the operating theatre, Master found the Sergeant still settling details. The former occupants of the State bedroom would have been thunderstruck at its appearance. Rolls of anti-septic wool, duplicate operating knives, sharpened for the tenth time, bottles of antiseptics, anæsthetics, towels, sterilisers, and a host of minor appliances, which in the sight of the lay observer would have produced a shudder of apprehension, were duly inspected and approved.

The garrets with their rows of neatly arranged stretchers, the kitchen supplemented by its half-dozen open-air stoves, and the cooks smoking their pipes with clear consciences, were all duly visited and questioned.

The Gael at No. 1 section had induced his limited space to squeeze in an extra twenty stretchers.

Porteous, with doubtful shakings of his old head and careful consideration, agreed

to accept an extra ten patients under pressure, but failed to see where they were to go. He did not fail to recognise that the law of necessity is unanswerable.

There was a balmy stillness in the air, which whispered of green English lanes and primrose paths. But to those who dared to think there was also a subtle tension of the atmosphere which foretold that many a young life that evening witnessed its last sunset.

Phelps at dinner was inclined to gloom. He was also filled with news. "Cavalry to the number of many thousands were present, close by." Therefore the battle was imminent.

Porteous, his fork arrested half-way to his lips, turned in his chair and pierced him with a glance.

"Did you see them?" he snapped.

"Er—no—er—but I was told by——" explained the padre.

"Humph!" grunted Porteous with ill-suppressed chuckles. "Usual rumours. Tosh!"

The door opened and Champion, his face beaming, entered with a live goose. The Boy recognised it as his purchase.

"A real good 'un, sir," he announced, holding the bird for Master's inspection. "Just come from the farm. Shall I kill it and serve it up to-morrow, sir?"

"H'm," considered Master. "I think we had better say—er—the day after to-morrow, Champion. Perhaps the day after that; it depends."

Half a dozen shots in the distance, answered by our own guns, caused us to pause, listening. Had it begun already? No. All was again still. Only the occasional exchange of compliments.

"Well," said Master at last. "I was warned three days ago to prepare. This is the third night. I am for bed. That there will be no bed to-morrow night I'll bet dollars to doughnuts. Good night."

"Good night, sir," said the night-duty N.C.O. in the hall.

"Good night, Sergeant," answered Master. "And, look here, warn all the officers' servants that they must be ready to fall in to make a stretcher-carrying party as soon as they are required. I think there will be trouble about daylight."

"Very good, sir," replied the sergeant cheerily.

An owl hooted discordantly in the shadows of the garden. A star-shell from the German trenches lit up the skyline. Then all was again still, and dark.

There was no shadow of doubt when the battle began. At 7.30, almost to the minute, the first heavy gun gave the signal. Then the house shook as it had never shaken before. The noise was terrific. Hundreds of guns of every sort of calibre in the near distance belched forth their devastating shells. The world has long ere this heard of the artillery fire preceding the advance on Neuve Chapelle. It lasted exactly one hour.

We breakfasted as usual, and had finished before the Artillery slackened. All was in readiness. In about two to three hours the first wounded might be expected. They would be mostly walking cases which, in the first Infantry attack, had fallen on leaving our advanced trenches. Passed through the hands of our Regimental Aid Posts and Field Ambulances, they would be collected from the latter by the Motor Ambulance Convoy, and be shoved along rapidly, in order to make room for the seriously lying-down cases which required hand-carriage from the field, and would therefore of necessity arrive later.

We were not out in our calculations. A Motor Convoy, loaded to its full capacity, rolled into the compound as expected. As each car reached the verandah, its contents were checked by the tallies which had been attached to the wounded in the Field Ambulances. If the case required immediate operation he entered the chateau; if trivial, the car continued its journey to No. 1 Section. A convoy of twenty cars can carry 150 "sitters" or eighty "liers."

We needed no telegraphic or confidential news regarding the progress of the battle. Information in detail was freely given by those who ought to have known best. With due allowance made for the excitement and bias of wounded raconteurs, one could easily piece together the story.

We learned that our own Artillery fire had been hellish,

and that the first line of enemy trenches had been taken with a rush. Any news beyond that was obviously of doubtful accuracy. No man yet arrived had been present after the first rush. Later news would reach us, hour by hour, as each convoy deposited its freight at our doors. We thought of London, of the expectancy there, of widows still ignorant of their condition, of many things best forgotten, and of many others spelling glory and honour.

The wounded were gloriously cheerful. Before dawn they had stood to arms, and with fixed bayonets waited for the signal which to each individual meant death or victory. They were delighted with the result, but by no means too excited to eat or sleep.

Orderlies and Nursing Sisters did not spare themselves. The cooks were ready with literal baths of soup, meat, and vegetables, calling for consumption. The wounded rapidly forgot their bodily injuries, fed ravenously, smoked, rolled over, and slept.

But there were those even amongst the first arrivals who could eat little and sleep not at all. The Sisters washed their wound-stained faces, slipped off their clothes, and issued clean shirts. The officers examining wounds shook their heads. Compound fractures of shoulders, shattered elbows, and here and there a limb hanging anyhow, need more than a first field-dressing.

The serious wards downstairs were, as yet, not full, but were rapidly filling. The

next convoy would overflow into the conservatory. Florrs and the Boy labelled their cases for operation in order of urgency. The operating-room sergeant boiled his instruments.

The second string of motors arrived with alarming rapidity, and the officer in charge of it brought news of many more to follow.

Master, stationed on the verandah, studied his tally. If he had made no mistake, No. 1 Section could still accept 37, and Porteous at No. 2 had room for 31.

Amongst the new arrivals there were many serious cases. The chateau would be quite full when these were admitted. With the conservatory still up his sleeve, Master delivered his verdict to the inquiring Motor Convoy officer.

"You can bring another 50 lying-down cases," he said. "Then you must switch off to the next Casualty Clearing Station lower down. In the meantime I will wire for an ambulance train. Give me a clear hour, and then come and see me again."

"How are things going?" asked Florrs, wiping his perspiring forehead with a bare forearm. His hands at the moment were not in a condition for personal service.

"We have taken the second line of trenches, and according to a N.C.O. who has just arrived, were in their reserve trenches when he was wounded," replied Master.

"Good!" cried Florrs, slipping back towards the operating theatre.

"A telegram, sir!" announced an orderly, producing a Signals' message.

"Excellent!" exclaimed Master, "Ambulance Train in half an hour!" Scribbling on a leaf from his pocket-book, he paused to calculate. "H'm—how many are fit to travel? Here, orderly, deliver this message at the Headquarters of the Motor Convoy. As soon as the train is in you will warn the Convoy to report here. I have 50 lying-down cases and over 200 'sitters' ready to entrain."

"Very good, sir," answered the man, running down the avenue.

In a moment the news had spread through the building. Every case capable of facing a twelve-hour journey in a train was to be dressed, fed, and ready within half an hour. Each one must bear a tally correctly stating the nature of the wound and what had been done for him. Those unfit to move must be carefully segregated. A few would never move again. Others needed a few days.

The condition of affairs at No. 1 and No. 2 Section had, so far, been taken for granted. No news meant good news. Master knew the capabilities of the Gael and Porteous to a nicety. An empty Motor Ambulance being at hand, there was now an opportunity to visit them.

The car wasted no time. Speed limits did not apply.

The Gael, his hair wildly on end, and in his shirt-sleeves and apron, was in the thick

of things. Every inch of space in the schoolroom had been utilised, and under tarpaulins in the yard the cooks had found a resting-place. Orderlies, washing and dressing wounds with the knowledge which only experience can give, worked independently. Those cases requiring special advice were set aside for the officer. The Gael's physical strength was notorious. He would need every ounce of it before he had finished.

A mumbling voice hampered by bandages rose above the din.

"All right, matey, want a smoke do you," answered an orderly with his mouth full of safety-pins. "Wait until I fix this Jock's leg and I'll give you a frag. Keep smiling, cocky!"

Master, summing up the situation in a glance, entered the doorway. He saw that all was well. It took a lot to rattle the Gael. The day had only begun.

"Train coming," he announced gaily. "I will send you cars for as many as you can safely load up. Be ready in half an hour."

"Right, sir," replied the Gael, pausing to rub his nose with a bare elbow.

Master had not waited for the answer. He was off at full speed round the corner by the church to wards No. 2. The sight of the church gave him sudden food for thought. The curé had promised to lend it in case of need. The good work done by the church at the Aisne was not forgotten.

It was a useful card up the sleeve.

Porteous, only just beginning to feel a bit ruffled, but perfectly equal to his surgical liabilities—physician though he was—smiled joyfully at the news of a train. His Section was filled to bursting-point. He had accepted his full half hundred. To be relieved of them meant only a short respite, for he knew quite well that there must be another half hundred waiting for him somewhere else. His soul, however, longed for even that short time in which to clean up and straighten things.

"Rather amusing," he whispered. "Do you see that lad over there in the corner with his kilt round his head? He made a bit of a row when I dressed his arm. It was a nasty wound, poor boy! I told him that there was a man of an Irish regiment opposite him who would notice his shouting. The hint was quite sufficient. The poor beggar gritted his teeth and never made another sound."

The railway station was not more than half a mile away. The next minute Master's ambulance was on its way there.

The long empty train with its red-crossed carriages was shunting into its place as he arrived. A few minutes sufficed for orders. The train could take 300.

"I will fill you full up," cried Master to the O.C. train, jumping back at once into the car.

The Motor Convoy Ambulances were already lined up

outside the chateau. The percentage required for the Gael and Porteous at the Sections were told off without delay. The filling of the remainder began at once. Lying down cases first; then sitters.

A loading party at the hospital and an unloading party, with an officer, at the train had their work out. The actual journey was nothing. But each man had to be properly ticketed, and start decently clothed. All that took time. In the midst of it the Motor Convoy officer from the Front dashed up to claim the fulfilment of Master's promise.

"All right," agreed Master. "Off you go. We will take another 300. By the time you reach the Field Ambulances and back again, we shall be almost ready for you."

It must not be imagined that there were no other Casualty Clearing Stations in the area of operations. There were several. We, however, were nearest the firing line, and consequently filled first.

The last waggon for the train had not left when the new convoy from the Front arrived. The Field Ambulances were shouting to be evacuated. For the moment the battle had ceased, and the field between trenches was being cleared of wounded who could not walk. The news obtained from the latter was easily interpreted. We had taken many trenches in the first rush, then barbed wire and machine-guns had caused a check. The optimism of those brought in earlier in

the day had given way to pessimism. The news, however, that a fresh attack was contemplated for the evening, kept the interest from flagging. Nevertheless, the fact that our objective had not been gained was perfectly plain. That many Huns had been killed was also equally plain.

Every inch of room in the hospital was again filled. We had forgotten time. Champion, having at different hours methodically laid meals for us, hung pathetically about at unexpected corners of the building, hoping that he would be asked for food. Between whiles he carried stretchers.

Another train came, was filled, and departed. The roar of Artillery became spasmodic, then settled down to the normal nightly salvos.

The rattle of machine-guns reached us on the evening breeze. Then darkness fell.

The cases now were of a different variety. Fractured thighs and injuries requiring careful carriage cannot be got over the ground quickly. Stretcher after stretcher was carried upstairs into the operating theatre. The languorous vapour of chloroform permeated the building. The cries of men happy in delirium passed unnoticed. At long intervals Florrs and the Boy came away in order to give the operating-room time to air and to be cleaned. They smoked a cigarette and fed.

The night-duty party, who had been forced to sleep during the day in order that they

might be of some use at night, tumbled out from their lairs in the stables. For the officers, however, there could be no night-shift. It was impossible.

The padre had been busy all day writing letters for stricken men, and promising to deliver messages for those who felt the hand of death upon them. In due course Charles, his satellite, summoned him to follow an unobtrusive ambulance waggon. The waggon, filled with its full complement of stretchers, was bound for the cemetery. Nobody noticed it, and, except the few men to help, there were no mourners. At such a time the waggon passed with saddening frequency. And yet, as one paused from one's gruesome task to think, one could not but doubt whether those who travelled therein were not to be envied.

The lights of motor ambulances flitted through the shadows of the trees almost incessantly through the evening. Towards midnight there came a pause. The Bearer Section of the Field Ambulance were now collecting the worst cases. We could not accept any more in any case, and told them so.

As the grey dawn broke, Master and the officers of an ambulance train finished loading at the railway station. Great acetylene flares in the station-yard still burned and were forgotten. The train was completely filled.

Many of the worst cases were still to come; many were too bad to move; but the back of the battle had been broken.

Another dozen hours ought to see it through. The excitement of contest was at an end. The aftermath of victory had in a great measure still to be faced. "And the evening and the morning were the first day."

CHAPTER XII.—FESTUBERT.

May was all that spring should be. The chateau trees, mostly chestnuts, remnants of the time when an abbey had occupied the ground, became singularly beautiful. The artesian well in the garden babbled coolness. The meadows stretching to the boundary stream were given over to cows. The gardens were in full bloom. The weather became so hot that we lunched under the trees. The men held sports. The officers played cricket. The battle of Neuve Chapelle was some weeks old. We began to grow restless, to wonder, to listen to drifting rumours.

One point we decided, in some shape or form, to settle without delay. Our limitations as regarded accommodation could no longer be borne with content. The great straw shed—tile-roofed—open on all sides—straw-floored—was now almost empty. Master paced it carefully and calculated possibilities. The verdict was 250.

With tarpaulins we set to work to rig up sides. Then the owner was approached. He possessed an oil-engine, and was open to common-sense reasoning. Also, his house being not far from the firing line, he was a little apprehensive. He wished

everything to be in our favour. The result showed itself in an installation of electric light at the owner's expense. Palliasses stuffed with straw would afford excellent beds. Stretchers to an unlimited number were at our disposal. Clean straw alone on a warm night is no mean bed. A shelter for a kitchen, and the detailing of a staff of an officer and men completed the arrangements. The Gael was selected to command the "Straw Shed" section. He looked upon the work, calculated possibilities, and saw that it was good.

Some dozen miles down the line rested a Canadian Clearing Station. It possessed tents, but, having buildings, did not need them. We accepted an offer of assistance from them without hesitation.

With the tents they sent a couple of officers and five-and-twenty men. The meadow behind the chateau was the very place for them. The tents were up in no time. The personnel was as keen as mustard to do something. An open-air kitchen with Canadian cooks joined the chateau staff with *entente cordiale*. The mother unit welcomed them gladly.

It never rains but it pours, for close upon the Canadians' advent there arrived a whole

cargo of hospital marquees and smaller tents for our use. Two officers, a handful of men, and three Canadian Nursing Sisters also suddenly reported for temporary duty.

We began to suspect that, as the Americans would say, there was about to be "some" battle.

Under the trees a camp of marquees was, from these latter tents, rapidly equipped with beds for wounded officers. A dining-tent for convalescent officers followed.

A considerable rearrangement of staff became necessary, but as this led to competition between the Sections, the results were good. Every N.C.O. and man began to strive with renewed energy. Master, keeping in touch with them all, was able to advertise good points and rectify bad ones.

We were certainly being given a chance. Nevertheless, it was to be hoped we would not be asked to move quickly to any new area.

We now boasted of "No. 1 Section," "No. 2 Section," "The Chateau," "The Straw Shed," "Canadian Section," "Tent Section," and "Officers' Section." The total accommodation was well over 1000. We were content. Surely at last we had reached our limitations!

The question of aeroplane observation was still alive. The Red Cross flag was hung at the rear end of the camp, as well as at the front door. Then we studied stains. Condyl's Fluid, strong and in bucketfuls, was tried. This was followed by a green dye

mixture. The results, as regards the beauty of hitherto new canvas, were certainly not successful, but the horrible khaki-green streakiness was effective. At all events, no aeroplanes attempted to molest us, although they frequently fought air battles in our neighbourhood.

Florrs and the Boy, content with what the Chateau Section offered them, looked on from the windows of their operating-room in critical aloofness.

The Gael, however, was not to be outclassed by preconceived ideas as regards the proper equipment of operating theatres. With hair triumphantly on end he set to work. A small Indian marquee was at his disposal. For this he made an excellent floor of cinders well saturated in antiseptic solution. An acetylene generator outside permitted of a tube entering the tent at the roof and running an operating-lamp. A proper operating-table, boiling basins and lamps, and a special orderly and Nursing Sister that he wheedled out of Master, completed his outfit. One of the Canadians was a good operator. The Gael promptly made him an honorary member of the tent. All that they wanted was elbow-room. That there would be no lack of material the Gael knew only too well.

The weather was excellent. Some rain fell, but did little harm. Mackenzie's store was packed to the roof with food-stuffs and hospital comforts. The supply train which daily arrived from the Base was

given no rest. Each morning the "Universal Provider" (as the padre called him) thought of something else he wanted, and got it. Every wounded man must at least be fed, and that might mean thousands. Blankets in unopened bales were hidden away. Equipment for three improvised ambulance trains of 200 patients each was stacked in the coach-house.

Once more we waited in suspense,—killing time and calculating.

An officers' race—a yard start for every year of age—was organised and won by the padre, a short head in front of Master. The Boy, the favourite, couldn't catch the two old ones. Mackenzie, with his fifty odd years, was unable to keep the pace. Porteous, whose toe was gouty, was compelled to scratch. Florrs, the "galloping major," was too horsey for foot work. The joy of the men, who at the last moment made their way in force to what had been thought to be a secluded area of the grounds, was vociferous, and much money changed hands.

The day of Festubert was a perfect day of summer. As far as we were concerned the weather made all the difference. Mud and rain would have hampered us dreadfully.

The Artillery attack began shortly after daylight. The first convoy of wounded arrived about nine o'clock.

The news from those who came first was jubilant. We expected it would be. It always was. But what about

later? Concealed machine-guns and cleverly contrived barbed-wire traps had forced their memories upon our calculations. Whatever the final result, however, the first comers were gloriously optimistic. In their opinion the show had, so far, gone without a hitch. Neuve Chapelle could not compete with results. *This was the push.*

Later reports confirmed the first. The element of depression on the day of Neuve Chapelle had shown itself comparatively early in the day. To-day there was nothing but delight.

In the Canadian tents the walking wounded lay about and snored with all the abandon of weary but contented men. They had been up all night, and the reaction following wild excitement was upon them. Amongst them were many Canadians.

We had not met the Canadian troops in action before. They were a cheery crowd. One of them was wandering slowly, first on one leg and then on the other, from the ambulance waggon towards the tents. "Where are you hit?" he was asked. "Well, guess I've got a smack in my stern worse than any I've had in my life," he grunted with a grin.

Sorting the walking cases, Master noticed a Canadian lad, his head upon his chest, walking like one asleep.

"What is wrong, boy?" asked the former.

"Can't carry any more to-night, sir," he moaned. "Can't carry any more to-night."

"Who is he?" inquired Master, passing him along.

"A Canadian stretcher-bearer, sir," replied a N.C.O. "He has been going on like that all the time. He is fair dazed, sir."

Poor lad! It is hoped that he eventually recovered his reason. When he left next day by train he was still the same. All night he had moaned that wounded men were still lying out in the open, and that he could not carry any more. "England (and Canada) expects every man to do his duty." Whatever eventually became of him, he had certainly done his share—to the last ounce of his strength.

With the later arrivals of serious cases came German wounded and prisoners. There could be no doubt that our troops were advancing. The cheeriness of every relay of wounded attested to the accuracy of the bulletins. "Sitters," clinging to captured German helmets, shouted joyous remarks to the orderlies, and waved hands to their friends. The verve of victory was in the air. Those already in the hospital called for news, listened eagerly, and returned to sleep. All was well.

A Canadian Medical Orderly, a man of slow movement, silent and methodical, stood beneath a tree contemplating a German officer's sword-knot which had been given him. One of us explained its use to him. From his expression it was evident that he was learning a lot in a short time. It was discovered that in private life he was a

moose-hunter. Accustomed to the solitary depths of the forests, to the study of the primeval, what thoughts must have passed through such a man's mind on a day like this! Could any fish have ever been quite so out of water?

To relate in detail all that happened during that day of many hours would be but a repetition of the history of Neuve Chapelle. Concerning the magnitude of our task, however, there was no comparison. It was not, perhaps, that the battle was greater, but that our unit was capable of bearing a share of the work infinitely greater than on the last occasion.

A couple of ambulance trains were duly loaded; a motor ambulance convoy from down the rear relieved us of a hundred "sitters"; an improvised train was fitted up with palliasses, medical store, a kitchen, plenty of food and personnel, and disappeared with its freight of slighter cases round the curve. And yet the general stream of those calling for house-room never seemed to flow the less.

The straw shed proved to be a godsend. Stretcher cases, with room to breathe the clean spring air freely, lay in long rows and waited, without impatience, for the re-dressing of wounds or re-application of splints already applied in the Field Ambulance. A meal and sleep was what they wanted most.

The Canadian Section filled up, was evacuated, and filled again. One of their men, with log-book and pencil, entered

names at full speed, and wore a distinctly worried aspect.

The number of serious cases unfit to move grew hourly greater. Each fresh convoy added its percentage. It was only what we had expected.

Towards evening the usual lull became apparent. The customary counter-attack of the enemy was now to be expected. The news from the firing line was still exhilarating.

Night fell upon a scene too pathetic for detailed memory. The flood of slightly wounded, filled with the delight of victory, had passed upon its way, leaving those who were to pay the price. The steadily burning lamps of the operating-tent in the open, and the constantly opening doors of the theatre in the chateau, told their own tale. He who wishes to carve a road to fame should never look back!

It was midnight. Every stretcher in the rooms was filled. There was little of the peace of night upon the scene. In the conservatory a delirious German, crawling, whining, and grabbing at the plants, required supervision. Near to him a brace of others, oblivious to all things earthly, lay moribund. Another Hun, crying out for this and that at minute intervals, without due cause, was told plainly to "Shut up." He obeyed, and fell asleep without an effort.

T. Atkins, as usual, made little fuss. If he was in pain, we seldom knew it. A great many slept as happy as children.

The electric light lit up the whole place like day. The night outside was very still. In imagination one could see the sentries at their silent posts.

There was no shadow of anybody being spared from his work that night. Master glanced below stairs, saw that all was well, and mounted to the operating theatre.

The sleepy, warm atmosphere of chloroform permeated the room. The flare of an acetylene lamp over the table showed him at once the cause of the momentary silence. The deep breathing of the soldier on the table alone competed with the hiss of boiling water. Florrs, a weight of responsibility in his eyes, looked up as he entered. It was easy to read the cause. It was, unfortunately, no new tale. A shattered limb hung in the balance. Was it possible to save the leg without losing a life? The man had been wounded that morning.

"What do you think, Master?" asked Florrs anxiously.

"You can never save it," said Master.

"Can he stand the operation?"

"He must. He will die if it is left."

"Right!"

It did not take long. Practice had made the operative technique perfect. Only one more hero to face life with one leg, or next day, to slip from our grasp into a land where it mattered not at all. Which was best?

Master hurried away. An-

other stretcher, with its waiting applicant for a place on the table, already blocked the hall-way.

There were many other places to be visited.

The Gael and his coadjutor were found struggling successfully with bullet forceps in their tent. Pieces of shrapnel the size of half an egg are better outside the body! A Canadian Sister, indefatigably doing her bit, stood by.

The straw shed was providing cases in numbers which it seemed impossible could ever be finished. And yet it is surprising what amount of work steady application, if free from panicky calculation, can perform in due course. The worst that can happen to a wounded man is to die. It is but an episode that, sooner or later, must come to each of us. To give way to sentiment during a battle may cause disaster.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning that Master returned from an ambulance train-loading performance. The motor convoy drivers, hardly able to see the road for want of sleep, had been sent to their own lines until the morning. The transport to the train and subsequent loading had taken some two hours.

Champion had captured some ration rum, and hot water stood upon the fire. The Boy, mixing himself a stiff jorum, added sugar and lemon, smoked a cigarette, and discussed with Florrs, whose operation cases were to have precedence for

the next few hours. The time for relaxation was very short. An hour's respite had become necessary, in order to give time for scrubbing out the operating-room.

Presently the Gael was induced to leave his victims and recuperate his inner man also. With him came a couple of Canadians. Porteous, deserted of necessity to run his own show in his school, had not been seen since breakfast. Master, knowing exactly what cases he had, left him to work out his own salvation.

In half an hour the Mess was again empty.

At breakfast-time another welcome ambulance train announced its arrival, and from the Front came a call for empty beds. The battle was over, but the worst of the aftermath still remained.

The second day was almost as strenuous as the first, but it differed in that we knew the extent of our liabilities. Convoy officers from the field ambulance brought definite figures. We could calculate ahead. The whole job would take about three days. We arranged accordingly. Somebody must go to bed this second night. We could afford it. And besides, if we did not sleep somebody would "go phut." Whereupon Master began issuing orders. There was mutiny, of course. He had expected it. Firmness became necessary. A percentage of officers, nursing sisters, and orderlies were ordered to rest, whether they liked it or not.

Dinner that night was usual,

but it was a somewhat humourless feast. We had seen little of each other socially for six-and-thirty hours; but the work was not yet done, and we did not know when another advance might take place.

Master, draining a glass of red wine, searched for his pocket-book and yawned.

"How many admissions do you fellows think my wretched clerk has got in his books for yesterday alone?" he inquired.

"A good few," answered Florrs. "This unit has never had such a doing before."

"Worse than Coulommiers Railway Station, I suppose?" ventured Porteous. "Still I shall never forget that night after the battle of the Marne as long as I live. Ugh! I can smell the sickly bloodiness of the place still."

"We put through quite five hundred in our Section," stated one of the Canadian officers proudly.

"Well," smiled Master, "our demnition total reached 2000, and goodness knows how many may have escaped record."

"H'm. I will bet the Huns could show a record to which in comparison ours is nothing," said Porteous.

"Please God!" echoed the padre.

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Beneath the chestnuts we played a cricket match. The Canadians beyond their tents played baseball. The swans sailed across the pond. The

one-legged peacock was asleep in a stone flower-vase on the balustrade. The concierge and gardener gathered lettuces in the garden. In the straw shed the farm labourers were housing their carts for the night. Champion, a pair of ducks in hand, climbed the fence of the paddock. The chirrup of birds in the trees and the cooing of doves added to the peace of things. The chateau and tents were empty. Had there ever been a battle?

The sound of Artillery fire to the east, and the buzz of an aeroplane in the near distance, answered the question.

Here this narrative must, of necessity, come abruptly to an end. The exigencies of service admit of no appeal. Master, unexpectedly captured for a higher command, suddenly disappeared from our midst. Florrs, almost simultaneously, was invalided to England, and returned later to command his own unit. Porteous also was wafted to another sphere of action. The padre now follows a cavalry regiment into the field. Mackenzie, suddenly collapsing, disappeared on a stretcher to England. The Boy professes to know something of the art of surgery, but refuses the labour of the historian. The Gael, strong in muscle and zeal, shakes his head impotently at the suggestion that he should continue the diary.

As Johnny Gurkha might have said: "What can do?"

IN THE WESTERN DESERT OF EGYPT.

It was a bright winter morning, with a sharp nip in the air, when the troop train, which had taken all night to travel the hundred miles across the desert from Alexandria, came to a final stop at the little village of Dabaa. This insignificant place had suddenly blossomed out into greatness, thrust upon it by the fact that the Khedivial railway happened to end there, and that a British Force, forming part of the Army about to operate against the Senussi, was using it as a starting-place for mounted troops concentrating at Mersa Matruh.

Besides a squadron of yeomanry, a small group of officers bound for Matruh were dumped on the sand, and left to look after themselves. Being old campaigners, they managed to obtain a breakfast of sorts by the time-honoured method of barter, and then search was made for the promised car that was to take the party eighty miles across the desert.

It was discovered that the only means of transport were three Ford cars—one of which was provided by way of escort, and was nearly filled by the driver, a maxim gun, and its gunner. The remaining space, except for that occupied by mails and parcels to be delivered to outposts along the road, was entirely at the disposal of eight passengers with their baggage. It should be

explained that the touring body of each car had been removed and replaced by a shallow box, across the front of which was a plank seat for the driver and one passenger. Comfort had been sadly sacrificed to utility, a fact which impressed itself on us more and more as the day wore on. The apparently impossible was at last accomplished, and the procession started. The road lay due west through a sandy desert broken into small dunes. But let not any one picture to himself a smooth macadamised road with a more or less level surface. The "Khedivial Road" is called a road merely out of courtesy. It is nothing more than the desert, with the larger stones cleared off and the humps levelled. In ordinary times this makes an excellent surface for light traffic, but at the time this narrative opens the transport of an army had gone over it, and as a road it was a failure. The R.N.A.C.D. drivers, who "had been there before," took no chances with it, and steered a skilful course through the stones and bumps to one side of the road whenever possible. Thus the journey lacked nothing in interest. It took all one's strength to remain in the car, as it rocked its way over the uneven ground, bumping over humps and stones, and occasionally taking a dust-sea over the bows.

Every now and then, axle-

deep in a dust-hole, the car would stick, and then all had to get out and lift the car on to firm ground again. So the day wore on, the sun grew hot, coats were discarded, and we halted for lunch. We passed one or two squadrons of yeomanry marching the same way as ourselves. One party told us they had found no water in the wells where they had expected it, and were making for the next well, ten miles distant. The horses looked done up, still there was nothing for it but to push on. We also passed a small post of Sikhs guarding an important well, and gave them letters and parcels. This half company must have had an anxious time, isolated in the desert, far from help, and in the midst of Bedouins of doubtful friendliness. Only a few days later news was received that the local sheikh had gone over to the enemy, and this and other posts were then withdrawn.

By midday we should have met the cars which ran daily in the opposite direction, but no sign of them appeared, and we began to wonder what was the matter. We knew the enemy were very near to Matruh. What if they were between us and Matruh, which was our destination? There was nothing for it but to go on, and so we went on, keeping a sharp look-out. We had some exciting moments, when we saw right ahead a cloud of dust, but as we got nearer we made out with relief British yeomanry. And so, as the

shades of evening were falling, we reached Matruh, tired and powdered with dust, hungry and thirsty. But we heard at once that a battle was being fought a few miles west of us. The wounded were coming in, and there was work to be done. Thoughts of tea and bath had to be put aside, and it was not till hours later that we could think of our own requirements. The affair was a small one, but a good number of casualties had occurred through an unfortunate accident. A squadron of yeomanry making a reconnaissance came in contact with the enemy, who had fired on them from a wadi. The yeomanry charged, and on reaching the edge of the wadi found an abrupt and precipitous drop of about fifty feet. The wadi was eventually cleared of the enemy, and the yeomanry joined up with the infantry support, and bivouacked not far from the scene of the action. The next two days were occupied in clearing the wadis in the neighbourhood; and the little force having finally come up against a large body of the enemy, extricated themselves skilfully, and retired unmolested to Matruh.

Such was the position of affairs on December 12, 1915. For months past there had been unrest among the Bedouins in the western deserts of Egypt. Three hundred miles west of Alexandria lies the little port of Sollum, and just beyond this is the frontier of Tripoli. Since the Italians wrested Tripoli from the Turks, they

have been continually fighting with the powerful sect known as the Senussi, headed by its leader, a religious fanatic, Sayed Ahmet, known as the Grand Senussi. Up to 1915 his relations with Egypt had been friendly, but the British alliance with his sworn enemies, the Italians, gave German and Turkish intrigues a favourable soil to work in. The Senussi, stimulated by German gold and promises of the loot of Cairo and Alexandria, were easily induced to make a raid on the undefended frontier. The Grand Senussi himself, to the last, kept up an appearance of friendship with Egypt, and pretended that his young men had got out of hand, and were committing hostile acts against his wishes. The Government of Egypt, unwilling to excite hostilities, refrained from sending any forces to the Western Frontier, until in November 1915 the Senussi appeared in force at Sollum and Barani, and compelled the small garrisons of coastguards to evacuate these places. Troops were then hurried out by ship and road to Matruh, and the small port put in a state of defence. This was the state of affairs when hostilities commenced in December. The strength of the enemy was uncertain. The trained fighting men of the Senussi were known to be well armed, and to possess machine-guns and some mountain-guns, and it was supposed that from one to two thousand of them might take the field against us. In addition there

might be an unlimited number of local Bedouins armed with a variety of weapons, from an old flint-lock to a Martini-Henry rifle.

There was thus a large element of uncertainty in the affair, and the first troops who were dumped down in Matruh, after a stormy passage in trawlers, lost no time in putting the place in a condition of defence.

After the reconnaissance mentioned above, it was decided to take no form of offensive measures until the defences of Matruh had been made secure; and the next few weeks were busily occupied with making trenches and redoubts, and erecting barbed-wire entanglements. There was an immense amount of work to be done also in landing ammunition and stores, improving the water-supply, and making roads. The nights were often enlivened by enemy snipers, who fired into the camp, without, however, doing any harm. This form of amusement was put a stop to by parties of Australians and Sikhs, who lay outside the defences at night and ambushed the snipers. One sniper, at least, paid the penalty with his life, and the others decided that it was an unhealthy amusement.

So we went on in the even tenor of our way until our aeroplane brought us news of a gathering of the enemy only seven or eight miles west of us. They appeared to be camped in a deep and tortuous wadi, called Wadi Merjid, which ran down from the inland plateau to the sea.

Our General decided to pay them a Christmas visit. An hour before dawn, in the biting cold of Christmas morning, we set out, horse, foot, and guns, and had not gone far before a sudden flare on our right showed that the enemy were not to be caught napping. The blazing bonfire was evidently a signal to the watchers on the hills. A troop of cavalry went off to investigate the phenomenon, and their progress was announced by a few shots, the curious double "plop-plop" of which made us feel some curiosity as to the weapons which emitted such a strange sound. They were probably old jezails, and did more damage to the firer than to any one else.

Presently the stars began to pale, the eastern horizon grew visible, and "rosy-fingered dawn" appeared. The sun rose over the desert and revealed our long column winding like a great snake over the plain. Suddenly a deep "boom" on our right drew all eyes in that direction, where just discernible the naval ship supporting our right flank could be seen; and soon afterwards a great column of dust and smoke on the hills ahead of us showed where her shell had burst. The range was extreme, but shell burst on the spot which those who knew the country assured us was the situation of the enemy's camp.

We continued our march towards the hills until, perhaps, 3000 yards from them, the infantry deployed. The enemy

now fired a few rounds from their mountain-gun without doing any damage, and our guns unlimbered and began firing. The enemy's gun position was soon spotted, and the guns were trained on to it. The second shot struck the exact spot. Later in the day a dead gunner, a broken shield and wheels, and a quantity of ammunition, found in the gun-position, told a story that was easy to read. In the meanwhile the infantry were rapidly advancing over the open plain to the attack on the enemy's position on the hills, which they quickly took with the loss of a few men wounded. It was about this time that the enemy received a nasty shock, which took all the heart out of their fighting. A couple of regiments of yeomanry, with guns, suddenly appeared in their rear, and threatened to cut off their retreat. This body of cavalry had left camp about the same time as the main body, and making a wide detour had struck round the enemy's right and occupied a position on the west of their camp. There seemed a good prospect of capturing the whole force, but the broken nature of the ground enabled a strong rearguard to hold our infantry long enough to allow the main body to escape through the only gap left open between the cavalry and the sea-coast. Fighting in the wadis and caves lasted until dark, before which the enemy's camp had been taken and burnt, and a large amount of ammunition,

barley, camels, and prisoners captured. The enemy suffered a crushing defeat, which completely altered his prospects. The easy victory over the British and almost unopposed entry into Alexandria, which had been promised to the deluded Bedouin, proved a dream which had a rough awakening. A hasty retreat was made westwards, care being taken at the same time to avoid the coast, where British warships had a nasty way of shelling any visible camp.

The British Force remained bivouacked on the battleground, owing to the lateness of the hour and the exhaustion of the troops, and returned to Matruh next day.

The humour of the situation became evident, when it was learnt that Gaafir, the leader of the enemy's force, had intended to attack Matruh on Christmas night, as he believed that British soldiers always got drunk on Christmas day. If he had known that there was not a drop of liquor in the camp he might have modified his views; but he will no doubt be a wiser man in the future.

To make the narrative clear it is necessary to go back a little. The Bedouin living between railhead (Dabaa) and Matruh, under the leadership of a sheikh known as Sidi Harun, remained neutral until the middle of December. At that time news was received of his hostile attitude; our small posts were called in, and the road no longer used. Sidi Harun's first hostile act was to cut the telegraph wires

near El Bagush. This did not worry us much, as we had wireless, and it is said that the diminution of telegraphing facilities was even welcomed by some departments. Be that as it may, it was evident such an act could not go unpunished, and early in January expeditions were sent east to settle our debts with the said Harun. However, this wily gentleman was not to be caught, and contrived to put a large piece of desert between himself and our columns. All the same, he received the punishment due to him, as very large stores of barley, and many camels and goats, were found and removed to Matruh. These articles being the staple of the country, the material loss to the local Bedouin was enormous.

Throughout January the weather was of the vilest. Heavy rain fell, and for days at a time floods and mud rendered the Force immobile, and made the landing of stores and movement of material very difficult. The popular conception of a desert as a dry, arid waste, underwent modification in the minds of a few thousand Britons, who lived and moved and had their being in water and mud, in which carts sank to their axles, horses to their hooks, and men over their boot tops.

This was the state of affairs when, about the middle of January, news was received of a large collection of the enemy about twenty-six miles west of Matruh, and a little south of the Khedivial Road.

Aeroplanes immediately went out and verified this report, and preparations were made to attack the hostile force as soon as possible, as information was received that they were only waiting for camels, to march south to Siwa Oasis, where it would be impossible to follow them. The weather was too bad for some days to allow of the movements of troops, but on January 22, during a break in the weather, a start was made late in the afternoon, and a force composed of Sikhs, New Zealanders, Territorials, South Africans, and Yeomanry, marched to Bir Shola, which was reached about 10 P.M. The march was a long and trying one, and on arrival some spade-work had to be done in the dark to make the camp secure. The bivouac spread itself round a good well full of sweet water. This was one of the numerous wells, or, rather, large underground caverns lined with stones, which we supposed to be of Roman origin. A well of this kind is known as a "Bir"—a word which raises the wildest hopes in the breast of the British Tommy,—hopes unfortunately destined to be dashed to the ground when he finds only a limited supply of brackish water, instead of the delectable fluid of his dreams.

Far into the night the stamping of hoofs and the clanking of the pumps told of the long procession of horses being watered. It was a pitch-black night, cold and windy, with occasional heavy showers of rain. Fires were not al-

lowed, as it was hoped we might take the enemy by surprise. No one was sorry, therefore, when, before the first flush of dawn, we were again on the march, heading by compass-bearing across the desert to where the enemy's camp had been located. The going was heavy, as the rain in the night had softened the surface of the soil, which in that locality was of a loamy character.

After the long march of the previous day, followed by a short and disturbed night, the men were feeling the strain, and the pace became slower and slower, while many fell out with sore feet, and others hobbled along as well as they could.

The cavalry, with some guns, were a couple of miles away on the left; and it was that column that, after about three hours' marching, spotted the enemy, and greeted them with a few rounds of shrapnel. The effect was magical. No sooner did the sound reach the column of weary, limping infantry, plodding along with heads down and set lips, than a cheer broke from the whole line, and the men, in their eagerness to get at the enemy, broke into a jog-trot. Aches and pains were forgotten, and stragglers hurried to regain their regiments. There were still two miles to advance, but there was no lagging now, and the distance was rapidly covered. The enemy were occupying a position on a slight rise in the otherwise level desert. Their strength was

uncertain, but it was thought to be considerable.

The sun was now well up, and its heat, drawing the moisture from the soil, caused a condition of the atmosphere which rendered observation very difficult. There were mirages in every direction, and an object on the horizon was so distorted that it was often impossible to make out whether it was a bush, a man, a camel, or a tree. At one time it would look like one thing, at the next moment its appearance would completely change, and what one thought was a number of men or camels would turn out to be a few bushes.

In spite of their difficulties, the infantry advanced boldly to the attack, while the cavalry watched the flanks.

The guns came into action in the centre, and soon there was a full orchestra of musketry, maxims, and artillery roaring to heaven the hatred of men, and overwhelming nature's peaceful harmony of sun and desert—for a time. The battle raged fiercer and fiercer, and casualties began to arrive at the Field Ambulances which had opened some distance in the rear of the firing line. But there was no shelter even from rifle fire, and several bullets fell in the dressing-station—one actually passing through the cap of the C.O. and wounding a bearer in the arm. Shrapnel, too, burst uncomfortably near, but fortunately without doing any damage.

In the course of the morn-

ing the enemy made a small attack on our right flank, which was easily repulsed; but later in the day a more determined attack on our left flank at one time looked serious. The cavalry were driven in, and Bedouin could be seen closing round to our left rear. Two guns, however, turned their attentions in this direction, and on the infantry reserves counter-attacking, the enemy made off.

In the meantime, the main attack had succeeded in driving the enemy from his position and in taking his camp, which was promptly burnt. No great quantity of material, however, fell into our hands, as the enemy had known of our approach, and had taken everything away before the action.

So far things had gone fairly satisfactorily, but now our troubles began. To begin with, the transport had sent up a message to say they were stuck in the mud about two miles from our last night's camp, and were unable to proceed any farther. This meant that there was no food or water for man or beast except the rations in the haversack and on the saddle—no blankets or greatcoats for the night. It became very evident that we were in for a bad time. The wind had got up, and heavy showers became more and more frequent. There was no shelter for the wounded, and it had been possible to evacuate only a very few, as the motor ambulances were in the same

plight as the transport—stuck in the mud miles back. In addition, it was by no means certain that the enemy were beaten, and if they got between us and our transport in the night things would be most unpleasant. A council was held, and, in spite of strongly expressed views to the contrary, it was eventually decided to bivouac where we were, and wait till morning before beginning the retirement. This decision was arrived at in view of the exhausted condition of men and horses, the difficulty of finding the way across the trackless desert on a pitch-black night, and the practical impossibility of moving the wounded.

And so it was that to many the night of January 23, 1916, was not one of the most pleasant in their lives. Coatless and blanketless, lying in mud and pouring rain, the troops shivered through the long night, while some had the additional incentive to sleeplessness in the uncomfortable knowledge that the probabilities were that, when dawn broke, we should find the enemy all round us, and between us and our next meal, if there was anything left for us when we arrived.

At long last a weak and watery dawn warned the jaded troops that another day of ceaseless effort had commenced. With the first light, arrangements were made for the conveyance of the wounded. Those with lighter wounds were mounted on the cavalry horses

—the dismounted troopers leading the horses. Others were seated on gun-limbers, ammunition carts, and in the horsed ambulance waggons. The more serious cases, to the number of some seventy odd, had to be carried on stretchers by hand, and for this purpose numbers of men from the regiments were detailed as stretcher-bearers. This proved to be a most arduous task. Weighted with all their equipment, and sinking ankle-deep in the mud at every step, four bearers would struggle forward a hundred yards or so, and then set the stretcher down, utterly exhausted. Four more would take up the burden, and so slow progress was made, until eventually, after six miles had been traversed in six hours, the transport train was met, and the stretchers with their loads were transferred to the empty waggons. The enemy, after all, made no attempt to harass us, having probably received more than they cared for on the previous day. The wounded having been transferred to vehicles, and the troops having received their rations, better progress was made, and we arrived back at Bir Shola before dark. Here another wretched night was passed, as the gale reached its maximum, and frequent heavy squalls of wind and rain swept the shelterless desert. Not a stone, not a bush, not even a dip in the ground was there to break the fury of the gale; but, in spite of all, the tired-out men slept, and woke refreshed.

We had reached the road,

and thenceforward there were no more difficulties. The motor ambulances soon removed the wounded, and took them to hospital at Matruh, where the hospital ship was waiting to transfer them to Alexandria.

The troops, weary with their long marches and heavy exertions, arrived back at Matruh in the course of the day, satisfied with the work they had accomplished, and ready for the next excursion. And so ended the first phase of the campaign. We had cleared the enemy away from within striking distance of Matruh, both east and west, and it at once became evident that we must change our tactics, assume the offensive, and take the war into the enemy's country.

Such a campaign was, of course, purely a matter of transport, and now began a period of more or less tedious waiting for the troops, and of anxious thought and hard work for the Staff. Aeroplane reconnaissances reported that there was no collection of hostile forces nearer than Barani, eighty miles distant from Matruh. To attack the enemy in this position meant weeks of preparation, as it was necessary to carry not only all supplies of food and ammunition by road, but also a large reserve supply of water for men and animals. To send out a force without water might have led to disaster; for, although there were wells in plenty marked on the map, no reliance could be placed on finding a supply of water in

them sufficient for a large force. The problem of transport was therefore a difficult one, and the solution was found in making an advance *dépôt* of stores at Unjeila, a small village on the sea-coast, thirty-nine miles west of Matruh. A garrison was placed at this spot, and a large supply of stores accumulated there in anticipation of the advance. Here was an opportunity for an enterprising and mobile enemy to make a sudden attack on the small garrison, overwhelm it, and seize the stores if possible, before help could arrive. That no such attack was made shows our Commander had made a correct estimate of the character of the enemy.

At last preparations for an advance reached a final stage. Reinforcements consisting of the remainder of the South African Infantry Brigade had arrived (partly in place of the New Zealanders and Sikhs who had been transferred to other spheres of activity), and a large number of camels had been sent to supplement the hard-worked transport of the Australian Divisional Train.

And so on Sunday, February 20, the long column of infantry, cavalry, and guns, with miles of camels, waggons, and ambulances, set out for the west along the track which runs by the coast, and had been improved for the purpose.

The weather now was very different from what it had been in January. Bright sunny days had succeeded the storms and rains of the pre-

vious month. The warm sun, tempered by the cool northerly breezes off the Mediterranean, made open-air life a delightful experience to those accustomed to office work in the gloomy atmosphere of the North. There were lads from London and Glasgow, who, probably for the first time in their lives, experienced real sunshine and health-giving breezes in the open parts of the world that the hand of man had scarcely touched. A miracle, too, had happened under our very eyes. The desert which, until the rain fell, presented an almost uniform brown surface, suddenly burst forth into green. In patches tender shoots of young barley made a green carpet over acres of what was previously an arid waste; and more surprising still, the green leaves of various plants began to push up through the hard soil. In an incredibly short space of time flowers appeared among the leaves, and soon the whole desert was a wonderful garden of flowers. Everywhere were great fields of asphodel growing waist high, and in favoured spots were great yellow globes of ranunculus, scarlet anemones, and purple iris. Crowsfoot, mallow, and cuckoo-pint reminded one of English meadows, while the dead-looking scrub came to life and put forth pretty little magenta blooms. Many other flowers whose names are unknown to the writer added to the feast of colour, which for the brief space of a few weeks covered the drab surface of the desert.

Birds, too, began to arrive from the south on migration, and after a stay of a few days went on their way. The crested lark and pied wagtail were always with us, but about this time the beautiful yellow wagtail began to put in an appearance, and great flights of finches paid us flying visits.

Such was the fair face of nature, which claimed more than a passing glance. But War is a stern mistress, and permits no wandering looks.

The enemy were reported to be gathering in force at some wells about ten miles south-east of Barani. The British troops marched on until on the 25th of February they were encamped at a place called Wadi Maktil, on the coast. Here they were within striking distance of the enemy, and plans were made for an attack next day at dawn. The unexpected, however, happened. At dusk the enemy suddenly opened fire with a mountain-gun on the British camp from the neighbourhood of the Khedivial Road. This caused a few casualties, but the gun was soon silenced by our artillery. The sound of the guns was distinctly heard at Unjeila, nearly thirty miles away, and caused some surprise in the camp. The effect of this enterprise on the part of the enemy was to make a night-march a dangerous proceeding, and the advance was therefore postponed till next morning. With the first light, therefore, the cavalry reconnoitred the surrounding country, and reported that the enemy had

retired on their main position, which was on a sand-ridge running east and west, parallel to, and about three miles south of, the Khedivial Road. Eager for the fight, the column of infantry marched up from the sea-coast in a south-westerly direction, crossed the Khedivial Road, on which the armoured cars and motor ambulance convoy were waiting to join them, and advanced to the attack in open order.

The ground was slightly undulating, and in the centre of the position was a small mound from which a complete view of the whole battlefield could be obtained. The Staff took up its position on this mound, and watched the stirring spectacle that was being enacted. Line after line of khaki figures moved forward as if on parade, nothing daunted by the storm of shrapnel and rifle-bullets with which they were met.

A little to the right of the mound our artillery were firing furiously, and their shells could plainly be seen bursting right over the enemy's position. Some of the Bedouin were evidently firing black powder, as rows of little puffs of smoke were plainly visible, and gave a target to the artillery.

At this stage of the proceedings an amusing sight was witnessed. Four camels, led by native drivers, were seen plodding slowly across the battlefield behind our troops. What they were doing the writer has never discovered, but possibly they were carrying spare ammunition. They

were soon spotted by one of the enemy's guns, and shrapnel began to burst close to them. They plodded on without taking the least heed, to all appearance. Over and over again a shell burst so close to them that they were hidden by its smoke, and one felt sure that one at least was down. But no; when the smoke cleared there they were still plodding on, unperturbed and unhurried. And so it went on, until they finally disappeared in a fold of the ground, and about the same time the enemy's guns ceased firing.

In the meantime an attempt was made by the enemy to make an attack on our left flank. This, however, had been foreseen, and the cavalry, posted there for the purpose, brought the attack to a standstill.

At 1 P.M. the infantry, after a magnificent attack across the open plain in the face of a hot fire from maxims and rifles, fixed bayonets and rushed the position. As usual, the Senussi did not wait to argue the matter, but made off as hard as their legs would carry them in a south-westerly direction. The cavalry were ordered to follow, and immediately started in pursuit. After some hard riding, the Dorset Yeomanry came up with the main body of the enemy, with their guns and maxims still forming a compact force. Now came one of the most dramatic incidents of the campaign. Ordered to charge, the Dorset Yeomanry galloped straight at the enemy in two long lines,

and in spite of a hot fire from maxims and rifles, got in amongst the flying Arabs, whose one idea now was to get away as quickly as they could. Naturally, a good many casualties occurred in such a charge, but as a set off Gaafir the Germanised Turk, who was the leading spirit of the whole enterprise, was captured; and Nuri, the Commander-in-Chief of the Senussi force, was reported killed. The latter information, however, proved to be incorrect.

This battle, known as Agagir, took place on February 26, and, as it turned out, was the last battle of the campaign. The next day was spent in removing the wounded and clearing up the battlefield, and on February 28 the British marched into Barani and occupied it without opposition. Barani had been in enemy hands since the middle of November. Their first act had been to set fire to the coast-guard barracks, and when our troops arrived they found the barracks uninhabitable, partly owing to the damage done by the fire, but largely by reason of the great havoc caused by shells fired by naval ships at various times. It came as a surprise to many to find that there was no village, and nothing but ruined coastguard barracks standing in an open plain half a mile or more from a diminutive cove, where all material arriving by sea had to be landed. The coast was rocky and forbidding, and when the wind blew strongly from the north, great waves

dashed against the cliffs and sent showers of spray high into the air. Under such conditions the landing of the stores was carried on under great difficulties, but the distance by road was too great, and the sea was once again our lines of communication.

Here the troops remained from February 28 to March 8, while stores were accumulated and preparations for the advance on Sollum were made. Barani was voted by all a most unpleasant place. High winds blew constantly, carrying with them clouds of sand which at times filled the eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, so that one was blinded and half suffocated. There was no escape from these unpleasant conditions, as no shelter of any sort was to be had. One evening we were sitting at dinner when, without a moment's warning, a terrific squall of sand-laden wind drove across the camp, taking everything loose with it. Small articles such as towels, socks, helmets, and mugs went careering off down the wind, and great was the searching and sorting out of stray articles that went on next morning. The General and his Staff were dining in a tent, which blew down on them, and brought the meal to an abrupt termination. After the first gust, a downpour of rain followed and completed our discomfort.

The ill-luck of this detestable spot culminated unfortunately in the death by

drowning of a very gallant officer. A very heavy sea was running, but some officers and men were tempted to bathe in a small cove. Lieutenant P. H. Berry, R.A.M.C., Medical Officer of the Berkshire Yeomanry, had bathed and was walking away when he heard a shout for help from the water. Without a moment's hesitation he dashed into the waves, and was not seen again. Apparently the waves dashed him against the rocks and killed him instantly. His body was found some hours later, and he was buried with military honours. The man he had tried to rescue was drowned too.

At last everything was ready, and the Force began the final stage of the operations.

The infantry marched on the 9th, and the cavalry on the 11th of March. Our objective was the port of Sollum, fifty-four miles to the west. From Barani the road ran along the coast at a short distance from the sea, and presented the easiest and most obvious route to Sollum. At the latter place, however, the great desert escarpment, which, farther east, runs at a distance of ten miles or more from the coast, closely approaches the coast, forming a precipitous cliff. Sollum itself is a small village lying on the shore at the foot of this escarpment, which is here 500 ft. to 600 ft. high. A rough zigzag track runs up the cliff from the village to the old Turkish

fort at the top. The main camp of the Senussi was at Msead, two and a half miles south-west of this fort, and close to Msead was an ammunition factory, where a large quantity of explosives was stored by the enemy.

Obviously a force approaching Sollum by the shore road could be easily held up by a determined enemy on the escarpment, and Sollum would be untenable as long as the plateau was in enemy hands.

The following plan was therefore adopted by the G.O.C. The whole force was to march along the road to Bagbag, heading as if for Sollum along the shore. At Bagbag the infantry were to turn sharp to the left, make a rapid march across the desert, and seize the Medean and Erajib Passes. If these were taken the infantry would advance on Sollum along the plateau, while the cavalry would protect the right flank in the plains below. In conformity with these plans the infantry bivouacked at Bagbag on the night of March 11-12, and at daybreak set off across the desert in a south-westerly direction, making straight for the Medean Pass. By midday two battalions of South Africans had occupied the pass without opposition, and the remainder of the Force were camped at Bir Augerin, at the foot of the pass, where were five wells. The water from these wells was scanty, and at first, except from one well, reeked of

sulphuretted hydrogen to such an extent as to be useless for man or beast. It improved, however, after much pumping, and eventually there was enough water for each man to fill his water-bottle, and for all the animals to get watered.

Now, however, came a serious hitch. There was no water on the plateau, and the wells on the way to Sollum, fifteen miles distant, were reported dry. Also, the pass was impossible for wheeled transport. There was only one thing to do, and that was done. A reserve of water was always carried, in case of such an emergency, in iron tanks on camels. These tanks are known as "fantassies." When all the fantassies had been collected, it was found that sufficient water could be carried to supply the two battalions on the plateau for two days, but there was not enough for the whole force. It was necessary, therefore, to split the force into two, leaving two battalions on the plateau and the remainder on the plain below, where water might be obtained.

The next day, March 13, was spent in watering the camels, filling the fantassies, and sending them up to the top of the pass. These preparations being completed, at 5 P.M. both parts of the force started their march. The plateau force marched a few miles along the crest, while the remainder marched due north towards the coast, and

after dark reached a well at Alim Tajdid, where, fortunately, there was enough water to fill our water-bottles. On the march we had witnessed a curious, and at first inexplicable, phenomenon. At about 5.30 P.M., far away to our left, an immense cloud of smoke rose into the still air, like an enormous mushroom. It must have been at least 500 feet high, and hung in the air for several minutes. We heard no sound of an explosion. On our arrival at the bivouac this was explained, as two fugitives from Sollum met us with the news that Nuri and his force had fled at our approach, and that the explosion we had seen was the blowing up of the munition factory at Bir Waer. This news was a great disappointment to us, as the enemy was still unbroken. However, as things turned out, we had nothing to worry about.

At daybreak next morning the whole force, joined by the cavalry, marched towards Sollum. A halt was called at the foot of Halfaia Pass, about five miles from Sollum. This was an exceedingly steep pass up the plateau, and the cavalry had hard work to get up on foot and pull their horses after them. In addition, the weather was getting hot, so that it was not surprising that the pass was known by the troops as "Hell-fire" Pass.

The cavalry and the two battalions of infantry who

were on the plateau scoured the country, but found no sign of the enemy. Meantime the rest of the Force marched into the village of Sollum and occupied the hills round it.

The object of the expedition was attained, in so far that the whole of the British territory occupied by the enemy in November had been regained. The enemy forces, however, remained intact, and able to do further mischief. To break up this force, if possible, the Duke of Westminster's Light Armoured Car Batteries were immediately despatched in pursuit of the fleeing enemy, who were overtaken after a long chase in the open desert. On coming up with the enemy the Duke of Westminster, without hesitation, formed line abreast and charged straight for the guns, which opened fire on the advancing cars. The latter, putting on full pace, opened a hot fire with their maxims, and, marvellous to relate, succeeded in putting the whole force to flight, shooting down all the gunners who stood by their guns, and capturing every gun and maxim which the enemy possessed, as well as an immense quantity of ammunition and other stores. Few, if any, of the Turkish officers escaped being shot or taken prisoner. On our side there was not a single casualty.

By this magnificent feat the enemy force was scattered to the winds, and, as an army, ceased to exist. The armoured

cars had come into their own, and done what the other branches of the Service had been unable to do, that is, catch a mobile force of Bedouin in their own country. It was a splendid feat, but another, equally fine, was to follow.

News had been received that ninety shipwrecked sailors were in the hands of the Senussi, and were in a desperate state from starvation and disease. These were officers and men of H.M.S. *Tara*, which had been torpedoed off the Tripoli coast in November, and some from another ship that had met the same fate. These men were reported to be in the desert some eighty miles southwest of Sollum, and the Duke of Westminster promptly volunteered to make an attempt to rescue them with his cars. To convey them all it was necessary to collect every motor-car with the force and get them to the top of the pass above Sollum. The armoured cars were already on the plateau, but motor ambulances and touring cars had to be got up somehow. The existing track was a steep rocky road, with sharp zigzags and steps of rock in places eighteen inches high. It did not look promising, but the troops were turned out to fill up the worst holes and improve the worst corners, and one by one the cars made the attempt. Whenever an engine struck work, dozens of willing hands seized the spokes and almost lifted the car up the awkward bit. At some of the

corners there was no room to turn, and the car had to back up the next zigzag, at the imminent risk of going over the precipice. However, all the cars reached the top in safety, and assembled, to the number of between thirty and forty. At daylight on St Patrick's day the great adventure was begun.

The prisoners were supposed to be at a certain place in the desert, eighty or ninety miles from Sollum, and two guides were found, one of whom said he could show the way up to a certain point, while the other thought that if he arrived at that point he could guide the party the rest of the way. But it was many years since he had been there. The first guide fulfilled his promise, and the second guide took up the running without much confidence. The miles rolled by. Eighty miles were passed, ninety, a hundred, a hundred and ten, a hundred and twenty, and the guide confessed himself at fault. Still the Duke of Westminster would not admit defeat, and determined to go on, although there was petrol enough for 300 miles only. A few more miles, and suddenly the guide recognised a hill which he said was quite close to the place. Soon after, the encampment appeared, and the cars charged in a line. The guards fled, and many were killed by the fire of the maxims on the armoured cars. Then followed a scene of wild excitement, as the prisoners realised that they were rescued,

and threw themselves on their rescuers. For months they had been in the hands of the Senussi, without a hope of rescue. They had not been badly treated, but food grew scarcer and scarcer, until nothing was issued but a minute quantity of rice and some goat's blood. The only other food available was snails, which are found in quantities on the desert, and which the prisoners, weakened as they were with starvation and disease, had to go daily increasing distances to collect.

They had heard nothing of a British Force approaching, and hope was nearly dead, when suddenly motor-cars were seen tearing across the desert towards them, British voices were speaking to them, British hands were clasping theirs. The shock was almost too much for them, but they needed no urging to pack into the cars and leave the camp in which they had spent so many miserable days.

The return journey was accomplished without mishap, and the night was spent at an advanced camp which had been prepared for them during the day. That night there was little sleep for any one. The rescued prisoners had four months' arrears of news to hear, and had much to tell to sympathetic listeners, and they were far too excited to sleep. Early next morning the journey was resumed, and Sollum was reached before midday. There a warm welcome was given them by the troops, and

they were embarked on board the hospital ship which was waiting in readiness, and conveyed safely to Alexandria.

The campaign was finished. Patrols searched the surrounding country, and found various collections of arms and ammunition, which were destroyed. Garrisons were left in Sollum and Matruh, and the Force broke up, after having reclaimed all Egyptian territory which had been invaded by the enemy, broken up the enemy forces, captured the guns and ammunition, and made it impossible for any further supplies to reach them from the coast. The unfortunate Bedouin, who had been duped by the Turks, learned

a lesson they are never likely to forget. Bereft of all their possessions, and destitute of all supplies, they surrendered wholesale in a pitiable condition of want and starvation. Refugee camps were made for them, and employment found, but the season for sowing barley had passed, and it will be long before they recover from the blow.

The Senussi still occupy various oases in the midst of the Libyan desert; but all channels by which arms and munitions can reach them are closed by the occupation of the ports on the north coast by the British and Italians; and their power of offence is completely destroyed.

CONVALESCENT.

WHEN the first beast got his first bruise, and kissed, or rather licked, the place to make it well, there was born the not always gentle art of massage. Since then it has been practised, more or less empirically, for centuries by human beings. Now, reinforced by scientific knowledge, and carried to a considerable degree of manual dexterity, it has been pressed, like almost every other attainment of mankind, into the service of Bellona. The changes and chances of this mortal life led me to undertake its study some twelve months ago. Half a year of training, mental and manual, the cold misery of three examinations in the haunted chambers of Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, and behold me the much-relieved possessor of the desired certificate, and posted to a convalescent camp on the South Coast of England.

A War Worker's life is swayed by alphabetic combinations. For me the letters B.R.C.S. have been replaced by A.P.M.C., or Almeric Paget Massage Corps—more familiarly known as the "Corpse." As of old, I wear a uniform of navy-blue serge, but the blue hat and black tie have been reversed to a black hat and blue tie. I should not know myself in a uniform where these accessories were made to match.

Our badge is a design of

some intricacy—a wheel, a cross, and a pair of wings, subtly interwoven with the Corps initials and carried out in the national colours. To my mind it is vaguely reminiscent of the vision of Ezekiel, but to the general public it appears to suggest more modern forms of aviation than those practised by the prophet's cherubs—judging from the frequency with which we are asked our precise connection with the Royal Naval Air Service. But "Army Presbyterian Medical Corps" was perhaps the most ingenious interpretation put upon our mystic letters by some bright "man in the street."

Our camp lies just above the town, backed by a sweeping curve of the South Downs. It is built to accommodate between 3000 and 4000 men, and if reproduced in miniature might well figure in a catalogue at Hamley's as "Convalescent Camp; best model, complete with Y.M.C.A. hut and skittle alley; price 17s. 6d."

If you climb the green slope that rises behind it and look down at the camp from its summit, you are struck (pleasantly or unpleasantly, according to your nature) by the fact that it is not built on the rigid lines indicated by a strictly military design. Some rows of huts are straight, others diagonal, as though they had been petrified in the act of performing the evolu-

tion, "On the left, form squad." The main road in the camp runs more or less through the centre, but at a little distance from it a second path starts on a parallel course, curves away, and then creeps back to join its more decided partner for good and all, like the mildly errant wife in the type of play made popular by Sutro many years ago. Between these two roads lie various buildings, great among them the post office, greater still "The Hut." As a concession to the ignorance of outsiders, this latter erection is labelled "The Massage Institute"; but for us it is "the" Hut *par excellence*, compared with which the few score of other huts composing the rest of the camp are what Tommy would describe as a "wash-out." The ground on the other side of the centre path contains the large gymnasium-cum-theatre, in which the convalescent soldier ensues culture, physical and æsthetic. South of this lies the spacious recreation ground, where games recur in their proper seasons, even as the rotation of crops. This reflection leads me to remark that a dashing effort has been made by the camp this summer to cope with the problem of the nation's food supply in wartime, by snatching a rood or so from the soil of the contiguous golf links and planting potatoes therein. Horticulture is a speciality of sick lines, though pursued elsewhere according to taste and ability. A maker of gorgeous flower

beds once guarded his loved pansies from profanation by displaying at their side a gnawed mutton-bone with the grim inscription attached: "This is all that is left of the last man who stepped on our garden."

Further prowling in the camp precincts will discover great shiny kitchens, presided over, to the benefit of all concerned, by cooks from the Women's Legion. No one, so an ex-butcher from Suffolk once informed me solemnly, who had not the "heart of a bear" (combined, presumably, with the palate of Lucullus) could possibly complain of the dinners provided in camp. Certainly, judging from the letters written by men returned to the trenches, where lady cooks are dreams of the past, his opinion was shared by the majority of the convalescents.

In a far distant corner of Hutland, almost on the shoulder of the down, stand two small houses, side by side, reached by a steep white road which forms one boundary of the camp. Here about a dozen masseuses, including myself, reside, the rest occupying two more houses in the town. In summer, the upland billets are ideal; in winter—well, the wind sees to it that you do not contract tuberculosis from lack of oxygen, and that is always one danger the less in a world of peril. Waking early, if I am misguided enough to do so, I can see the camp below me stirring sleepily, while the

early sun spills gold lavishly over the hillside. Then I may slumber again, since I am no longer in hospital, and my work begins at the comparatively human hour of 9 A.M. Still, any fixed time for rising may be regarded as essentially premature, and that is why those of us who hold this principle are consistently late for breakfast. That meal disposed of, in a wise silence, we drift down the hill to the camp, usually one by one. After the luncheon interval, when the aloofness born of the morning has slipped from us, we return to work in pairs or groups. We even wait for each other, fidgeting on one leg, and crying "Hurry up, there goes defaulters." We dislike this call, apart from its association with the flight of time. It has a vicious, triumphant ring of "I told you so" about it, and on this particular bugle the last note peals sharp, suggesting the plaint of a culprit heard through the snigger of the tale-bearer who has betrayed him to justice.

If, as is frequently the case in this region, it is a morning of cloud and mist, torn here and there by sunlight, we look far over the town's red roofs to where the sea lies barred with black and gold; and as we draw near the huts, the keen scent of wood smoke drifts to us from an open-air kitchen by the roadside. Passing by "Sick Lines," we turn off the road down a narrow path, which in wet weather becomes an evil slide

of oozing chalk. The doors of the huts on our right are wide open, giving us a glimpse of stripped bedsteads, with plump mattresses doubled on themselves, and vieing pathetically with piles of neatly-folded blankets in mathematical symmetry of aspect. It does not pay to be fat in these strenuous times. From the depths of one hut a raucous bass voice carols forth the scarcely credible statement, "You called me Baby Doll a year ago." Men in blue and men in grey (for suits of the more sombre hue are rapidly becoming common) assemble at the open door of their dwelling, which bears on its outer wall the piteous legend "*Biere fini*," and, uncrushed even by this misfortune, give us cheerful greeting as we pass.

Our own sphere of operations once reached, we proceed to change our outdoor uniforms for overalls. In the coming Epic of War the overall of the woman worker should have no small place. It is the honourable (if hideous) badge of the service. Ours are white, the cooks' are yellow, nurses' grey or blue, munition workers' varied, but the ultimate purpose achieved is the same. It is the last word in the democracy of dress — a general levelling of all female forms (divine or otherwise) into ambulating cylinders, differing merely in length and diameter. True, the feet that carry the cylinders cannot all be cut to the same pattern, but the danger of soul-disturbing variety in this direction is mini-

mised by a careful watch for anything like an outbreak of coloured stockings, or shoes more dainty than discreet. Every woman knows that these things spread like measles if they are not taken in time.

As in the days of childhood, we have washed our hands and buttoned our pinafores, and are ready to face the day-long Push. For a Push in miniature it has become since the morning of July 1, 1916, saw a fresh advance undertaken by our troops on the Western Front. The troops press on, but the stream of wounded flows back to us, filling hospital after hospital, which in turn empty themselves, as swiftly as may be, into Convalescent Camps and Command Depôts.

Treatment by electricity goes hand in hand with massage for most of the cases sent to us. To pay adequate attention to twenty patients daily would be sufficient, let us say, to keep any of us from rusting in idleness. Increase this number by 50 per cent, as at the present time, and you provide each masseuse with such crowded hours of glorious life as are not easy to describe to those who have not lived them.

From our dressing-room we pass through a passage lined on either side with benches, whereon our patients sit, like starlings on a railing, waiting our attentions. We cast hasty glances to left or right in search of a familiar face. When we find it, we send its owner forth to the patients' dressing-room, whence he presently reappears with the in-

jured portion of his anatomy draped in a blanket, "like a bloomin' Kaffir," as he expresses it disgustfully.

Each man attends the Massage Hut at a fixed hour daily. At that time he is, theoretically, to be found in the passage I have described, when "Sister" comes to look for him. This part of the routine alarmed me not a little at first. It is trying to feel yourself the cynosure of some forty pairs of eyes while you call out a name, possibly of Celtic origin, probably wrongly typed on the card you hold, concerning whose correct pronunciation you are doubtful. It is worse when you do not know for whom to shout.

"What do you do if you lose your list of patients?" I asked anxiously of an old hand when I first realised that this misfortune was a not unlikely occurrence.

"You run down here at intervals and say, 'Any one here belonging to me?'" she replied.

"And if nobody answers?"

"Then you say, 'Is there any one here who would like to belong to me?' and if nobody answers that you give it up." I did.

We cling indeed to our timetables as to talismans. It is a document whose preparation requires much thought, as will presently be seen. With luck it does not bear the names of more than four patients requiring treatment at the same moment. Some time ago, at a period of extreme activity in the Massage Hut, a Power

that Is inspected the camp, and ordered the number of physical drills and route-marches attended by such men as were fit for the exertion to be increased. Thus the process of "making fit" would be speeded up, but the men of course must not lose their medical treatment. He departed, leaving fever in his wake. New schedules of work were hastily drawn up and displayed on the green baize notice-board that adorns our mantelpiece. Now the men in our camp are grouped in divisions,—A, B, C, D, and E. From the new notices we learned that "A" division drilled on Mondays at 9.30, while at the same hour "B" division revelled in a route-march, and C, D, and E languished at home. Tuesdays and Saturdays men of all divisions capable of doing so marched in company. During the remaining days of the week, A, B, C, D, and E took their doses of physical exercise at sundry times and in divers places set forth in uncompromising type. "Would Masseuses kindly note, in the case of each patient," said the authorities blandly—

(1) To which division he belonged?

(2) When, where, how, and why, if at all, he was marched and drilled, and arrange his time of attendance at the Hut accordingly?

Unofficially, but with equal emphasis, we were told to be careful not to interfere with a man's spare time in the afternoons, "for that would be unkind"; not to complain if

an inexorable sergeant retained him on fatigues, for that would be bad for discipline; not to keep him from rehearsals if he were a member of the Knuts' Kamp Komedie Kompany, for that constituted an offence to Art; always to let him attend medical inspections (hours unspecified), and, above all, to make sure he did not go without his massage for a single day. "That is all, ladies, thank you—carry on, please." For a delirious week or so we wrestled with problems of time and place that would have sent a railway traffic manager gibbering to Hanwell. Then, gradually we gave it up, and let things shape themselves. On the whole, they did so amazingly well, and the game went on as usual.

The patient once caught and conveyed to the treatment room, finds that Inquisition Chamber excellently well furnished. It contains thirty beds, ranged along the walls, and covered with blankets of gay scarlet. These are for patients who require to be treated in a recumbent position. Dotted about the room are a number of small tables flanked by chairs, and here the Massoose (I adopt the local pronunciation) can deal with injuries to the "upper extremity"—to quote the anatomy text-books. A splendid palm, encircled by flower-pots, adds a Kew Gardens effect to the Hut interior, much to its enlivening.

The electric plant demands a more minute description.

The Hut is supplied by the main current of the town. Medical electric switchboards are affixed to the walls at intervals. Through these the current, reduced in voltage, can be supplied in various ways to the bodies of the patients. Without going into detail, it may be generally said that electricity is given medically in two ways: by the use of (a) a continuous current, or, (b) an interrupted one. One of the main uses of the first method is known as ionisation. By this process a drug in solution is driven directly into the body of a patient at the spot where its action is needed. A pad, soaked in the solution, is placed over the part to be treated; an electrode—*i.e.*, a flat piece of metal—is bandaged firmly on to the pad, and also connected by means of an insulated copper wire to one terminal of the switchboard. A second, or “indifferent” pad, soaked in plain water, is placed on the patient at some distance from the first, and connected with the other terminal in the same way. A circuit thus established, the current is turned on, and, in passing through the patient, forces the drug into his body, acting in obedience to laws of electrical attraction and repulsion too complicated to discuss here. The process can be carried out in other ways besides the one I have tried to describe above. Its most frequent use in our work is for the application of chlorine (one of the elements of common salt) for the sake of its softening effect on adherent scars and stiffened joints. The

handling of this galvanic-current requires care.

Another form of electric treatment is known as faradisation. This is given by an induced current, which is perpetually made and broken by means of an ingenious piece of mechanism called Wagner’s Hammer, whose movements are based on the laws of interaction between magnetic and electric forces. The therapeutic uses of this current are various, one of the most important being to stimulate weak or wasted muscles. Its application causes these to contract and relax automatically, thereby improving their condition by exercise.

The tricky, mysterious demon Electricity is harnessed to further employments in the Hut. Of course he gives us light in the gloom of winter afternoons. He is also made to revolve an abominably noisy instrument called a vibrator, a piece of remedial apparatus that hums like a giant bluebottle with a cold in its head, and joins with the incessant buzzing of the faradic batteries to afflict your soul with the vain desire for silence. Then the demon warms the radiant heat-baths, semi-circular structures of wood and zinc, into which the soldier creeps, usually with joy, for they are snug in cold weather, and sweats the trench damp out of his system. Dug-outs or Dutch ovens is his description of these havens of heat.

Among the Hut furnishings we must not forget the Rowing Machine. If a winner of the Diamond Sculls at Henley were rash enough to take a seat on

this invention, he would find himself as wretched as Gilbert's billiard sharper, condemned to play with

"A twisted cue, on a cloth untrue,
And elliptical billiard balls."

For the machine is built for exercise and not for style. True, the seat moves with the rower: but you could hardly call it sliding, and a too vigorous push is apt to land the performer sitting on the floor, waving an oar—or, rather, short pole—feebly in the air.

"Think I'll get my blue for this, Sister? Make me an officer at once, then, won't they?" was the comment of one patient when this accident occurred; while another in the same situation disarmed the ready scoffing of his comrades with the proud reflection, "Well, it's a good thing we've got a Navy."

New patients are received in an apartment of imposing size. Part of it is screened off, to serve as a dressing-station for Tommy's minor injuries (not resulting from massage). The rest is office, tea-room, &c. Here every morning the M.O.C. Massage Hut and the Head Masseuse sit behind a table and gather the new arrivals by fifties to our cave. Each man is examined by the doctor, his case-card typed by a corporal, and the requisite treatment indicated thereon. He is then handed over to the masseuse whom the Head has selected to cherish him during his period of attendance at the Hut. In dealing the

cards, Miss —— shows a nice discrimination and an astonishing memory for the individual idiosyncrasies of her subordinates. If a masseuse confesses to a partiality for Welsh lance-corporals, it is very likely that they will be earmarked for her as they come. Another pleads for Highlanders; a third declares herself "sick of nothing but legs," like a tourist growling at a hotel chicken, and is placated by receiving cases with injuries to back or arm.

Trouble thickens when a man is sent in with a complication of ailments, to be dealt with in the limited time at our disposal.

"What's the matter with you?" a new-comer was asked recently.

He quoted his last hospital chart with fluent pride: "Debility, rheumatism, shell shock, shrapnel wounds right leg and left shoulder, sir."

"Good heavens!" gasped his questioner. "Which did they send you in here to be treated for?"

"Stiff-neck, sir." And as a "stiff-neck" he was entered accordingly.

A second card is made out for each soldier, on which his hours of treatment are entered, and he must bring it daily to be signed by the Sister in charge of his case. This, which for some occult reason he designates as his tram ticket, he carries in his hat, and generally reduces in about three days to a sombre pulp on which no pen can write.

The cards prepared in the office are brought into the

treatment room and sub-dealt to the masseuses by an orderly. He seems to enjoy the task as he peers round the hut for his victim, pounces on her with a grin and a cheerful "Two more for you, miss," drops the cards on the bed, and proceeds to the next one. You receive the unwelcome gift with smiling thanks, as though you had ample leisure to deal with any number of new patients. It is a fine tradition, and deceives nobody, least of all the orderly man.

Meanwhile you are leading a life comparable only to that of a cook, left, single-handed, to serve the longest possible dinner in the shortest possible time. The patients represent the courses of the dinner. You may regard No. 1 as the joint, and put him to roast in a heat bath, tucking a blanket neatly round him that none of the precious warmth may escape. If you are badly "rushed," and he is an old hand, you tell him curtly to "get into the heat"—an exhortation that might sound insulting to the uninitiated—and he meekly thrusts himself into the lamp-lit cavern on the bed. His complaisance leaves you free to deal with the next two dishes—patients, let us say, with adherent scars requiring treatment by ionisation. These two you proceed to harness to your switchboard by a complication of wires that remind them tenderly of a Boche entanglement. After testing all connections, to obviate the danger of a shock from any sudden interruption of the circuit, you turn on the

current, gently and slowly, until one or other of your victims cries "Hold! enough!" or words to that effect. Some one, perchance, will here exclaim, with exasperating intelligence, "But suppose one patient wants a stronger current than the other?" This is a real difficulty, only to be overcome by the judicious selection of, so to speak, twin-skinned patients. Even then I sometimes credit a smooth-tongued soldier with more tact than veracity when he assures me "That's all right for me, Sister, if it's all right for 'im." Still, the expedient of a double treatment is only resorted to when time is very precious.

The life of a camp masseuse being, like that of Marryat's boatswain, always one of emergency, the chances are that, having completed the harnessing process, you find three more patients awaiting you, clad in blankets and hats. Nothing will induce the majority of the men to lay aside their head-gear during treatment—a whim which is responsible for the quaintest effects of costume.

The cooking of the last three dishes is comparatively easy. You assign one to the vibrator, another to the faradic battery, and arrange the third for massage. While engaged in kneading his damaged anatomy, it behoves you to keep one eye on him and the other on the galvanometer needle of the switchboard to which your ionisation subjects are attached. An under-current of your thoughts is, or anyhow should be, flowing

in the direction of No. 1 patient, whom you sent into the heat bath, how long ago you would like to remember but cannot. The boy who stood on the burning deck was of a restless and complaining disposition as compared with Tommy under treatment, so No. 1 depends entirely on your overburdened memory for his release in due season. This unquestioning obedience has its drawbacks. Now and again a man's case-card is accidentally made out in duplicate, and he becomes the expected prey of two masseuses instead of one. As a result, he is daily seized by whichever Sister happens to be ready for him first, while the other, having called his name till she is hoarse, reports him "absent," in the vindictive hope that he will get C.B. It is sometimes days before the situation is cleared up, and not then through any explanation from the patient.

"The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker,
All jumped out of a big potato,"

quoth the rhyme. This pre-Darwinian theory of the descent of man may account for the similarity of the qualities displayed by men of all types after months of army life. Passive obedience to orders is, of course, the most obvious and comprehensible; but one cannot help surprise at meeting among the majority of these men a power of observation, satire, and repartee which might have remained for ever latent had war not

taken away their "civvy suits" and peaceful avocations. No incident of camp life seems sufficiently trivial to escape the soldier's notice and comment, the latter couched in every form of "English as she is spoke" from Blackfriars to Brisbane. Sometimes he indulges in reminiscences from "the other side." To get these at their best you must not ask questions, but listen, if you may, while men talk of their experiences to each other. Their word-pictures are at times almost unbearably vivid—for example: "The crater was about the size of this hut. There were 1600 dead in it. All right to have to go and make your tea there."

"All right," in the paradoxical speech of the Army, signifies the extreme of unpleasantness.

"Funny things, bombs," said a man marked from hip to heel like a plum-pudding through the action of one of these weapons. "A chap got one caught in his equipment once,—all right to see a bomb caught in your equipment and not be able to get it out in time. Oh yes, of course he was, into a thousand pieces."

Another day came even worse glimpses of home as war has made it.

"There are fourteen widows in our street now. They try consolin' each other." "There was a chap in our hospital next me what 'ad lost five brothers in this war."

I thought of the mother and hoped she might be dead.

But there is humour too, any

amount of it, though it is hard to reproduce on paper. Here-with a tale told to me by Pte. *alias* Darkie, dare-devil, wag, and impassioned lover of engines and all that pertains to them.

"When I get back to France, Sister, it will be chicken diet for me, that is if there are any chickens left by that time. Chicken or pig. I nearly got shot once trying to vary bully beef with pork for Sunday. It was in 1914, when we had all sorts out there, you know, Sister—Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, madmen and all. We started on a four days' journey with four days' rations. They were pinched the first day, or else the quartermaster found a hiding-place for them, I dunno—anyway they disappeared. Then three of us started out to kill a pig. We was expert butchers by that time. We took a hammer, and tossed up for who should kill the pig when we found it. It came to a Jock we used to call Boonker. 'Come and have a game of Boonker,' he'd say; it was the way 'e talked—'e couldn't say 'Banker' right anyhow. Well, we got to a farm, me and 'im and another, and in 'e went to the pig-sty, while we waited in a ditch outside. 'E was so long in there, we crawled out at last and looked through the hedge. Would you believe it, there was Jock 'olding out a tater to the pig, and saying, 'Choog, choog, come along then,' and the old pig snuffling yards away. You should have 'eard the things I said to 'im. I called him all the fools im-

aginable, I did. 'Put the tater on the ground,' I says, 'and 'it 'im from the side when 'e puts his 'ead down to pick it up. Hit 'im as 'ard as you can.'

"'Awa' you oot of this,' says Jock—he talked very Scotch, you know (the speech of the Metropolis is critical of Dorio)—but he did what I told him, and when the pig got his nose to the tater Jock hit at him with the hammer. But the pig's nose being sloping like, and 'aving two rings in it, the 'ammer slipped down and caught in the rings, and 'is nose was twisted proper, and 'e set up a squeal that brought the old farmer out with a shotgun, and we set off running for our lives. Jock was a stout man, and 'e kep' on grunting, 'Wait for mee Darkie.'

Darkie, I may mention, had been a champion runner in his day, so I privately sympathised with Jock's distress.

"And then," continued the narrator, "the farmer fired, and blowed if he didn't shoot off the tail of Jock's tunic. Next day he came up to see our Major, and there was an 'indentification' parade, but 'e didn't know any of us. Jock was in a suit of overalls. If they'd made him take them off it'd have been all right."

"And was that the end of your Sunday dinner?" I asked.

"I don't think," said Darkie firmly. "The next thing we went after was apples. A store of them in the barn there was behind the farm. We smelt 'em out, and took

and hid them in a shed. Then there was another complaint and another 'indentification' parade. The Major was standing by the door, and the apples just behind it, and he askin' if any of us knew anything about it, and of course none of us did."

"I wonder he didn't smell them," I remarked.

Darkie snorted at my innocence.

"Think we 'adn't taken care of that, Sister? They was covered with old onion sacks."

The eighth commandment is not treated with extravagant respect in the army. When I was nursing in France we "souveneered" from each other any article of which we happened to stand in need. Here, removed from the refining influence of our Allies' polished speech, we crudely "pinch" it. Pencils, powder tins, and towels are necessities of our daily work. Lose touch with any one of these, and it has gone before you have time to turn round. You do not waste time seeking to reclaim it, you merely snatch a similar article from some one else. Probably you get your own back, rather the worse for wear, in half an hour or less, so there is no great harm done. Fortunately the human hand is not detachable, or this indispensable requisite for massage would undoubtedly be missing when most needed.

Patients, in these days of stress, come and go with such bewildering frequency that one has little time for individual knowledge of them. There is a sameness even in their com-

plaints: stiff joints, adherent scars, rheumatic pains, or injuries resulting from some accident. These last are often more serious than wounds, but are not, in the eyes of authority, "worth a gold one"—that is, in civilian speech, not entitling the victim to the gilt stripe worn on the uniform of a man directly hit by an enemy missile.

But now and again a patient will leave a permanent impression. A Yorkshire miner was once sent to me for treatment. He was a squarely-built, powerful man, of the pugilistic type, with the blue lines on his skin, where some stray scratches had been permeated by coal dust, that are known as "colliers' marks." "Injury to right side," said his card. A question or two elicited the information that he had been buried alive owing to the explosion of a trench mine. He had sapped, true to his trade, farther than others ("Good lads, too," he was careful to explain) had cared to follow. It had taken many hours to dig him out.

"Were any ribs broken?" I inquired, feeling the site of injury. But he would have naught of anything so commonplace.

"Fracture and contusion, they had said at the hospital, no less. I nodded gravely, and his confidence was mine forthwith. He confessed his sins—and they were many—prior to his enlistment in K's army. He told me that his wife was coming south to see him—his wife and "nipper." He had

not set eyes on them for fourteen months, and he "juist had to tell somebody aboot it." I duly thrilled to this domestic idyll, and was rewarded for my sympathy the next day by an account of the meeting at the station that would have moved a modern playwright to repent his heresies, and sing praises of the "family as the unit of national strength." But, alas! scarce a week later, I learned that the rapture of the reunited couple had subsided considerably. "She asked me hoo was I hurt," said the Yorkshireman—evidently they had not troubled the Censor with much correspondence,— "and A said, A'll tell 'ee the truth. A was oop on the cliffs here, and a lass was huggin' me, an' that was hoo it happened."

"What?" I gasped; "surely she couldn't believe that; why, if you had said a grizzly bear it would sound more likely."

"Well, you see, Sister, she knew enough of me to say, 'Is thet reet?' and A said 'Thet's reet,' and she was fair wild. We get on weel enough at home," he continued placidly, "she savin' and I spendin', but doon here, she don't like her meals, and," he smiled again with the eyes of a child, "there's lasses coom from Lunnon week-ends, fine lasses too. You see hoo it is!"

I did, indeed, but found no words to fit the situation. I was not sorry when the candid young ruffian was "marked fit" and vanished from my ken.

It is one of the bitterest features of war that no one

occupied in the task of healing its victims can see their own success without a pang. A man discharged fit from a camp such as ours goes home on furlough for ten days. For this he has waited and longed for perhaps eighteen months. In his eagerness to attain it he will declare himself "champion" in response to the M.O.'s inquiries for his health. True, he will probably be thoroughly bored with his leave before it is over, since your soldier, old army or new, has a good word for any place—the trenches excepted—but the one he happens to be in, but he does not foresee that in camp. It is we who look ahead, following him in imagination from furlough to depot, through the hardening process of drill and route-march, back to "the other side" again. Beyond that we do not speculate. In the beginning of war we praised the courage that volunteered for untried horrors. What of the courage that a man must need to return, with his precious newly regained strength, to a Hell tasted before, and therefore now suffered a thousand-fold in the anguish of anticipation? But these things do not bear thinking upon.

We have the blessed advantage over workers in hospital, that Sunday is a day of freedom. In fact, from 12.30 on Saturday time is our own till Monday morning. On the last day of the week, therefore, an atmosphere of mild excitement pervades the Hut. There is a camp route-march, and you may watch at breakfast-time a mingled grey and

blue column melt away into the green background of the downs, and reflect, with almost the pride of possession, on the particular legs in which you are interested, and wonder if they will support their owners till the camp band goes out to meet the returning braves, and plays them home to the tune of our own particular march.

After the morning's work is over there are the weekly books to be made up, giving statistics of admission, discharges, number of treatments given, &c. This is done in the midst of chaos, for the orderlies are clearing up, and a screaming cockatoo who dwells in the outer office does his best to add to the confusion. With the indifference to surroundings born of custom, however, we take our turns at the day-book, and scribble down our figures for the week. There is a certain rivalry prevailing with regard to these.

"I've had ten 'fits' this week" is a statement that provokes envy, rather than the horrified compassion an outsider would have expected.

Free at last, we scatter to country, town, or sea, as our fancy dictates. When night descends on the unlit town, we draw our blinds with care and speculate idly on the chance of raids by air or water. One night vivid flashes appeared in the sky. Their white blaze tore the clouds with blinding light before

they dropped back into darkness. Once we should have been content to call it sheet-lightning, but now mere nature is ruled out. So—

Some said that it was lightning,
The others they said nay;
It's just our latest shooting trick
To scare the Huns away.

The "others" being in the majority, induced me to stumble up the starlit downs for a wider view. But all I saw convinced me that the fight, if there were one, was taking place in Heaven. A shooting star added itself to the celestial fireworks. Some one suggested it was of earthly manufacture, because it "had a blob on the end." I scoffed and fell into a gorse-bush. A creeping mist obscured the stars, and drove us home, just as the Last Post rang out, utterly beautiful, from the camp. In the small hours of the next morning I woke to the lightning once more, this time accompanied by thunder and rain. Nature was asserting herself at last. I muttered rude things to a non-existent listener, and slept again till the sound of reveille reminded me pleasantly that it was some one else's time to get up.

And so day by day *da capo*, it may be "for the duration," a synonym now in the Army for any period the termination of which is too remote to be seriously considered. So we can but possess our souls in patience, and echo Tommy's prayer, "Roll on, peace."

B. G. MURE.

"THE CROWNED PHILOSOPHER."

FREDERICK THE GREAT, as Lord Rosebery says in his Preface to Mr Flint's timely translation of Henri de Catt's *Memoirs*, is "in a secular sense the patron saint of Germany." It is he who has shaped his country's sinister ambition, and who held up for the emulation of future ages the supreme policy of pillage. The present Kaiser, who for Frederick's motive, glory, has devastated Europe, has framed himself consciously and deliberately upon the model of him who delighted to call himself "the wandering knight" or "the Don Quixote of the North." Of course he has fallen short of his exemplar, since he is equally remote from the soldier and the pedant, who met, by a strange union, in the heart and mind of Frederick. Nevertheless, the career of Frederick is of the highest interest to us just now, since we can best defeat Germany by understanding her, and nowhere shall we find a more vivid portrait of the greatest of the Hohenzollerns than in Catt's plain and honest memoirs.

Henri de Catt was born to be the patient servitor of a tyrant. He was of those to whom sycophancy is no dishonour. He was happy in bending himself to another's will, in living another's life,

in thinking another's thoughts. Though he had something of Boswell's willingly subordinate temperament, he was not, as Boswell was, a knowing artist. There is in his book an accidental quality, which by no means impairs its value. He draws up the curtain and sets Frederick the Great upon the stage, not with the gesture of an accomplished showman, but with the simplicity of one who has composed a drama almost without intention. "This is how it all happened," he seems to say, "and I am as far as anybody from offering a reasonable explanation." In truth, accident was the mainspring of Catt's life. He met Frederick by accident; by accident he entered his service; and in the King's service he would have remained unto the end had it not been for some offence given by accident and without meaning.

So faithful a character was Catt, that he is able to boast with truth that "the cooling off of this unique man, so little expected, so little deserved, did not influence his mind and heart." He was equally incapable of rancour and falsehood. He tells the story of his first meeting the King with his accustomed artlessness. He chanced to be travelling in the same boat

which was taking the King to Utrecht, and the King, disguised as the first musician of the King of Poland, invited him into his cabin. There took place the first of many hundred conversations, in which Catt played the part of listener with the greatest skill. The King, remembering his patience and his tact, invited him to Breslau, and thither he went some three years after the strange meeting on the boat. He entered the King's service under the best auspices and with the best advice. The Marquis d'Argens, who knew "the crowned philosopher" as well as anybody, was ready with caution and counsel. He urged the ingenuous young scholar to say little, to be composed, to enter as little as possible into jests, and to show small eagerness for the confidences which would be forced upon him. "Do not, for God's sake," said the Marquis, "criticise either his prose or his verse; don't ask him for anything, no money, and see only as far as politeness permits those whom he has decided are fools, rogues, intriguers, and carpers."

The excellent Sir Andrew Mitchell, British Envoy and Frederick's trusted adviser, showed the same understanding of the King's foible. "Without becoming too familiar with this Prince," said he by way of warning, "be yet frank and open with him, and when you are together of an evening, always bring to the fore questions of literature,

of philosophy, and especially of metaphysics, which he likes very much. Discuss the French poets with him, and if he shows you any of his verses, criticise only in so far as he requests. Allow him to speak rather than speak yourself." Catt took all the advice proffered him with exemplary obedience. For twenty years he listened to the King's voice. He received the title of reader to his Majesty, but it was his Majesty who read. Indeed, from the moment that Catt came to Breslau, he became rather a piece of furniture than a man. Had they gone forth together, he would have played the part of walking-stick to perfection. But it was at the King's quarters that they met, and there he did his duty as a listening, sympathetic chair. At the outset, the King put Catt at his ease by assuring him that he led a dog of a life, and sketched for him the normal progress of his day. He got up at three, so he told Catt, and sometimes earlier, though he owned that it was a painful business. He did his own hair, dressed himself, took a cup of coffee, and read his despatches. While he meditated his answers to the despatches, he played for an hour or more on the flute, an instrument upon which Alcibiades said no gentleman could play, and then gave instructions to his secretaries; after which he read old books, seldom new ones, and then gave the orders of the day. At noon he dined, played

again on the flute or read, and was prepared, at four o'clock, to talk with Catt. It was an eager, strenuous life, as he lived it, for he read and wrote with fury; and it says a vast deal for Catt's energy and persistence that for twenty years he was able to share it.

The advice which the Marquis d'Argens and Sir Andrew Mitchell gave was proved sound in the event. Despite all his professions of modesty, Frederick was one who could brook neither criticism nor contradiction. Unwilling to meet anybody on terms of equality, the victim always of a sudden caprice, he would set a slight arrogance against the fidelity of a lifetime, and dismiss the oldest of his servants for some paltry, inadequate reason. He lived and died friendless, because he did not understand that friendship meant giving as well as taking, and he was content, for the most part, to be surrounded by sycophants, whom he was free to insult either in speech or in the practical jokes of a rare brutality. His passion to be thought a poet made the task of conciliation far more difficult. He allowed himself the freedom of criticism; he allowed it to no other, and the unfortunate Catt was compelled to hear more bad verse and to praise it than ever before had fallen to the lot of man to hear and praise. He was never tired of repeating such scraps of praise as Voltaire had thrown to him. With an ingenuous pride he declares that Voltaire

had commended the doggerel in which he describes a trip to Strasburg. "You see from this approbation," said he, "that I am not such a bad poet as you might believe." One day, as a concession of kindness, he read to Catt some passages of his poem on war. "Nothing is so difficult," said he by way of comment, "as to make interesting the precepts of an art, whatever it is. Voltaire assured me that I had succeeded." And of course there was no more to be said. Nor did he understand any higher reward could be given to those who served him than a few verses from the royal hand. These verses were to Frederick what the iron cross is to William II. They were distributed so lavishly that they were very soon cheapened. He even paid his bets at times in the same currency. When the Empress Elizabeth was lying ill, he made a wager with Catt about her death. The winner was to pay at his discretion. "I shall make you a present if I lose," said the King, "and you what you please if I win." The Empress died, and all that the wretched Catt got for his present was an epitaph in verse! He owned to himself that "this was getting off rather lightly for an affair of this importance," but he was too full of joy to hint, even in jest, that the discretion was very slight. And after all, had he not shown a proper admiration of the King's poetry, his tenure of office would have been brief indeed.

And who would withhold praise when Voltaire had given it—Voltaire who, in the King's esteem, was a poet who never flattered, or who was very severe in this matter?

And Frederick, by a double error, was sure that, as he had the poet's virtues, *teste* Voltaire, so he had not the poet's vices. "Do not think," he adjoined the innocent Catt, "that I attach any great value to what I do? Not at all; if I have the passion for authorship, I have assuredly not its arrogance." Thus he deceived himself always. If ever there was a man who believed that he, the King, could do no wrong, it was Frederick. He drank in praise with all the eagerness of a thirsty soul. He knew that his verses were masterpieces all, because he had written them. He insisted fiercely upon having his own opinion supported. He was, indeed, an actor, who acted even to himself. He lived as on parade, though none were present save Catt. The slovenliness of his person, the squalor of his dress, were mere versions of his pride. He was, so to say, a dandy upside down, who knew that the Spanish snuff which besmirched his face would call attention to him more loudly than delicately-perfumed ruffles. But, his own verses apart, he seems to have been sincere in his love of letters. Though he was sadly to seek in Latin, though he made childish mistakes in spelling, though he had all the faults of the late-learner, he

gave himself whole-heartedly to poetry and eloquence. "With them," he said, "I am never bored, and I can do without anybody." It gave him a manifest pleasure to read aloud—a pleasure which explains the necessity of the listening Catt. He adored declamation, both for its own sake and as a proper accompaniment of kingship. "Why should I not declaim," he asks, "when all Nature declaims?" Thus he deceived himself, not seeing that Nature has never declaimed, except in the eighteenth century, when she was neatly clipped and barbered after the fashion of Potsdam. Nevertheless, he carried such baggage on his campaigns as no other soldier has carried. Wherever he went, in the field or at winter quarters, a library went with him. "Lucretius," he boasted, "is my breviary." Bacon, Cæsar, Tacitus, Plutarch, Cicero—these are some of the authors who never left him, and from whom he drew the lessons of his life and trade. Overcome by grief at the death of his sister, the Margravine of Baireuth, he turned for consolation to the funeral orations of Bossuet and Fléchier, and as he was always intent to imitate what he read, to play "the sedulous ape"; in fact, he produced himself a funeral oration upon Matthew Reinhart, master shoemaker, and presented it with pomp and circumstance to Catt. "That, my dear sir," said he, "is the fruit of the readings which astonished you. Bossuet and

Fléchier made funeral orations to celebrate the life and death of illustrious heads. As for me, not worthy to untie the latchet of the shoes of these great preachers, I have written the funeral praise of a poor shoemaker, who by his abilities, his virtues, and his piety, was more deserving than kings and princes to pass to the most distant posterity." There in a few phrases you have the real Frederick, a monarch, histrionic and insincere, with a rare talent for the trite and a constant love for copybook headings. Fresh from the study of the masterpieces of literature, he could yet murmur in the ear of Catt such maxims as these: "Mortals, employ your time," or "The fate of a king is very sad"; and then perplex his hearer by putting the question, "Do you know any prince who is as much of a pedagogue as I am?"

But he cherished one admiration always, which was sincere and complete—an admiration of Racine. The works of that great poet could never leave him, because they were stored in his brain. Not only did he know the plays by heart; he showed at times a clear appreciation of their qualities. Indeed, it was Racine, not Lucretius, who was his true breviary. In "Athalie" or "Britannicus" or "Mithridate" he sought pleasure in his happiest, encouragement in his darkest, moments. "To rest ourselves," says he one day, "let us read the tragedy of

"Britannicus"; and read it he did, with a pinch of snuff at the end of every act, until his reading was interrupted by the tears which flowed easily at the royal command. He looked even upon defeat through the words of Racine, which were for him at once a consolation and a commentary. After the disaster which befell him at Hochkirchen, Catt faced him "in a state of extreme emotion." He need not have yielded to his exoitement. The King came up to him "with a rather open air," and in a quiet voice repeated these lines from "Mithridate":—

"Enfin, après un an, tu me revois,
Arbate;
Non plus, comme autrefois, cet heureux
Mithridate
Qui de Vienne toujours balançant le
destin,
Tenait entrelle et moi l'univers
incertain
Je suis vaincu. *Daurus* a saisi
l'avantage
D'une nuit qui laissait peu de place
au courage."

Did ever a beaten soldier accept disaster in so strange a spirit of literary detachment? Frederick was, as he said, "a poor, conquered man," and he fell to declaiming the lines of Racine, like the consummate actor that he was. So eager was he to speak and to recite that he left the poor Catt no chance of saying a word; and presently, in forgetfulness of literature, undid his collar and pulled out the famous box of gold which contained eighteen opium pills, which he deemed "sufficient to take him to that

dark bourne whence we do not return." But he was soon back at Racine, invoking God in the words of the poet:—

"Daigne, daigne, mon Dieu, sur
Kaunitz et sur elle
Répandre cet esprit d'imprudence et
d'erreur,
De la chute des rois funeste avant-
coureur."

And truly it was not upon the golden box but upon the golden-tongued poet that he relied for help and succour.

But there was one poet who exerted a deeper influence upon Frederick even than Racine, and that poet was Voltaire. Voltaire, indeed, was his constant obsession. In whatever he did or wrote his first thought was: What will Voltaire think of it? A word of praise thrown to him by the great writer was as precious to him as victory itself. He treasured piously the poor little verses of his own composing, upon which Voltaire had smiled approval. Before the great man's name he abased himself—to others. "Voltaire has a genius for verse," he told Catt; "and I haven't. I am only a poor dilettante, who has great need of indulgence." Had another dared to hint so much, he would have chased him from his presence with insult. "By heavens! a letter from Voltaire," he exclaims one day,— "what a lucky day!" And when he had read the letter, "you must acknowledge, my dear sir," he insisted to Catt, "that this Voltaire writes like the angels." And thereafter he expresses his gratitude, like

the humblest of mortals. "This Voltaire is admirable," he confesses, "to think of me, and with his letters and works to feed my mind, which has great need of good nourishment." When he was in high spirits he would brag that he had acted the part of critic to the great man himself. "How many times," he recalls with rapture, "have I not corrected Voltaire himself, yes, Voltaire." But while he admitted Voltaire's genius, he never ceased to revile Voltaire the man. His royal vanity had been wounded too deeply for forgetfulness, though his royal taste refused to be adversely affected. He was never tired of talking about Voltaire's "diabolical character." "When you see him quiet," says he, "be assured that he is meditating some wickedness. His great pleasure is to set people at loggerheads, and, when he has succeeded, he roars with laughter, jumps and skips about. 'The scamps,' he says, with the laugh of a satyr, 'the scamps; that is the way to treat them.'"

At Catt's first appearance, Frederick had summed up for his profit the opinion which he held of Voltaire. "The world has produced no finer genius than Voltaire," he admitted; "but I despise him supremely, because he is not upright. If he had been, what a superiority he would have had over everything that exists!" That Frederick should reproach Voltaire on a matter of conduct is supremely ridiculous, and the reproach puts

in question once more the relationship which existed between the poet and the King. Truly the poet has the better of it in morals as in genius. It is Voltaire who is cast for the *beau rôle* in the tragedy enacted at Potsdam and elsewhere. Manifestly superior in wit and intellect, Voltaire was superior also in the justice of his cause. The friendship which linked the two men together was a friendship of hostility. They thought that they could not live apart from one another, and they knew that they could not live together amicably. But it was Voltaire who gave far more than he received, and who had every right to regard himself as the victim of autocratic impertinence. In the poor little squabble with Maupertuis, Voltaire was in the right of it, and he covered his assailant with the ridicule which he deserved. Though Frederick desired ardently to be thought a poet, he could not enjoy the equal company of poets, because he never forgot that he was crowned. The friendship which he offered Voltaire was tainted at its source. Here is Voltaire's "little dictionary as used by kings":—

My friend means my slave.

My dear friend means I am more than indifferent to you.

For I will make you happy, read I will endure you as long as I have use for you.

Sup with me to-night means I will mock at you this evening.

It is clear, then, that Voltaire

had no illusions, even if pride had blinded the eyes of Frederick. As he said himself, if he had no sceptre he had a pen, which he proceeded to use, dipped in gall. And then came the supreme insult of Frankfurt, where Voltaire was arrested and imprisoned. Never did a "crowned philosopher" so wickedly forget his dignity as when Frederick ordered a clumsy clown called Freytag to maltreat the poet, who had been his guest. That Voltaire should never have forgiven the affront was right and proper. That he gave too violent expression to his malice cannot be denied. But for the King to shed tears over the moral delinquency of a great man, whom he thought he could use as he presently used Catt, and whom he exposed to the insolence of a petty official, was a sublime act of hypocrisy. After all, the tragedy could have but one ending. There is even a kind of pathos in the King's lifelong submission to the poet, whose presence he wished for and could not endure. And Voltaire may surely be forgiven if he laughed at the memory of the poor verses and poorer philosophy, upon which he had once smiled with interested approval.

The Frederick whom Catt sets before us, is Frederick the amateur, the coxcomb, the dilettante. But there is another Frederick altogether, whose policy and depredations help us to understand clearly enough the enemies who con-

front us to-day. It is not merely that the Kaiser has taken his great ancestor for his model. He shares the ambition, as he shares the blood, of the marauder. When Frederick the Great succeeded to the throne of his father, a madman who had beaten, imprisoned, and threatened to kill his son, he was known chiefly as the author of a dull refutation of the Machiavellian system. At last, thought Europe, we shall see crowned in Prussia a king who hates craft as he hates flattery, who will expect of governments the same laws of morality which he expects of private gentlemen, and will ensure the peace of the world. With characteristic effrontery Frederick disappointed Europe as soon as ever he mounted the throne. His first act was to invade Silesia, whose integrity along with the other Austrian states his house had guaranteed, for no better reason than that he coveted its possession. For this act of brigandage no excuse can be found. Frederick's motive was the motive of the burglar, and no more. "Ambition, interest, the desire of making people talk about me," said he, "carried the day; and I decided for war." His crime was tenfold the worse, because it was unexpected and unannounced. He invaded the territory of a queen with whom he had no quarrel and no difference. He tore up the scrap of paper which enjoined friendship and protection upon him with the zest which the Hohenzollerns

have always shown in such enterprises, and stealthily threw an army into undefended Silesia. His troops were across the frontier before Maria Theresa knew that he had made a claim upon her province. And he completed the injury with an insulting message. He told the Queen that if she would grant him Silesia he would defend the rest of her dominions against anybody who should attack them, and, being a Hohenzollern, he did not see that the second promise, like the first, was worth precisely nothing. Nor did the savagery of Frederick find its results only in the province upon which he laid his thievish hand. It disquieted the whole world for many years. All the blood that was shed in Europe from Frederick's accession until 1761 was upon his head. As Macaulay says with justified rhetoric, "In order that he might rob a neighbour whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel and red men scalped each other by the great lakes of North America." Who, remembering the events of the last two years, shall say that history does not repeat herself?

Unto the end of his life Frederick remained true to his ideals of perfidy and treachery. Having promised guarantees, "mere filigree, pretty to look at but too brittle to bear the slightest pressure," he presently acted towards Poland as he had acted towards Silesia.

Eight years after he had guaranteed the rights and liberties of Poland he announced its first partition, on no better plea than that the partition would contribute considerably to the prosperity of his realm. And if he were a true Prussian in his policy of aggression, he was a true Prussian in his hatred of the drudgery of war. What he wanted always was the palm without the dust. He had the love of his house for a speedy war against a defenceless country, followed by a tyrant's peace. But in Maria Theresa he met his match. That gallant Queen, if in the end she was doomed to lose Silesia, knew how to fight for her country and her honour. She condemned Frederick to a life of warfare and hardship, which he did not contemplate at the outset, and which he endured with difficulty. He sighed for the peace, which did not come to him, as bitterly as the Prussians of to-day are sighing for peace. Through all his talks with Catt you may hear him bewail "the dog of a life" which he led. His enemies, he complains daily, will not give him peace. Having stolen what he wanted, he thought he should be allowed to go off quietly with the swag, and no questions asked. With an hypocritical effrontery, which William II. must envy, he deplored constantly the death and misery which he brought in his train. "You will agree that it is cruel," said he, after he had

taken Schweidnitz, "to send so many brave and worthy people to the other world, and why? For a few wretched roods of earth and a few huts." With the tears rolling down his weather-beaten face, he assured his faithful henchman that "nothing is so cruel as to be compelled to wage war unceasingly," and he does not see that the responsibility of compulsion lies upon the man who began it. Even the light of glory paled before his eyes when defeat and destruction threatened him. "Ah, deuce take it!" he exclaimed; "a fine glory indeed of burned villages, towns in ashes, thousands of suffering men, as many massacred, horrors on all sides, and finally finishing oneself off; speak no more of it; my hair stands up on end." He willed it, as his wanton successor willed it, and then lets his heart bleed for the sufferings which his greed imposed upon the world, as William II. says his heart bled for Louvain.

Thus we see in Frederick the legitimate forerunner of the Germans who have to-day drenched Europe in blood. He committed the same crimes, he indulged the same sentiments, he bleated forth the same excuses as have disgraced the present Kaiser. He left an unexampled legacy of perfidy, rapacity, and hypocrisy. Worse than all, he formulated the pernicious doctrine that the Germans can do no wrong, that what is a vice in others is in them a

manifest virtue. But in one respect he showed himself a far better man than those who have come after him. He did not make war upon civilians; he did not turn his arms against defenceless women and children; he refused to count rape and pillage among the proper practices of war. "The first man who pillages or destroys a house will be hung on the spot"—that was one of his orders. Once when a house, in which he lodged, had been destroyed, and a dead woman had been found in the garden, he confessed that these horrors made his hair stand upon end. He did not think that brutality such as that was warfare. "Princes who use such troops," said he, "ought to blush with shame. The blame is theirs, and they are responsible before God for all the crimes which their troops commit." What would he say if he could witness the infamies of which Germany has been guilty in Belgium and Serbia, in France and Rumania, in every country which she has invaded? Who knows? Perhaps he would have found excuses for them as he found excuses for the Russians when they had become his allies. "The Austrians," said he, "made an outcry about barbarities; yet they had no right to complain, and they did not complain when these Cossacks burned and devastated the King's countries. Are not the horrors which march in the train of war great enough without bring-

ing in people who make it a pleasure, a study, and a law to leave behind them the traces of destruction, murder, rape, and arson?" The apology is half-hearted, and leaves us doubting whether after all he would not, were he still on this planet, agree with the Kaiser that the German army of invasion was the poor victim of Belgian treachery.

Such was the man whom Carlyle set upon the topmost pinnacle of fame and glory, for no better reason than that he might use him for the expounding of a favourite text. In Carlyle's eyes Frederick was a strong man, and therefore justified in all that he did and said. That the panegyrist of Cromwell should make himself also the panegyrist of Frederick might seem incredible, if we did not remember that Carlyle was a slave not of fact but of preconceptions. Having once seen Frederick in the light of a hero, he would not permit him to be besmirched even by the truth. So he preached the gospel of the Super-man many years before Nietzsche, and did his best to prepare for the doctrine of Pan-Germanism, which has come near to destroying the civilisation of Europe. And Carlyle did the world a greater disservice than this. Having misunderstood Germany, he misunderstood France also. How should he understand either, when he knew no more of them than he could see from Ecclefechan and London, or gather from the books of others? His cloudy

vision would not permit him to separate the essential France—the France of Rabelais and Racine and Pascal, the France of provincial thrift and industry—from the Court of Napoleon III., with its busy pleasures and its restless frivolity. Here is a pronouncement which he made in 1870, a pronouncement as false now as it was on the day when it was made: "That noble, patient, deep, pious, and solid Germany should at length be welded into a nation, and become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vain-glorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless, and over-sensitive France, seems to me the hope-

fullest public fact that has occurred in my time." Thus are the minds of men, warped by prejudice and befogged by half-knowledge, dangerously deceived. It is not for nothing that Carlyle has statues set up in his honour at Potsdam. He deserves whatever posthumous benefits the Germany of his wilful adulation and complete misunderstanding can confer upon him. For he preached assiduously to Frederick's text that the deeds of Germans were always justified, and he must carry on to the end of time his share in the burden of responsibility for the greatest war the world has ever seen.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

MR JOHNSON.

WE met one afternoon on the Parade Ground at Bauchi. It was the King's Birthday of nineteen and fourteen, and the company of Native Infantry, incited, aided, and abetted therein by their British officers, were doing great things in the way of tugs-of-war, hurdle races, flat races, obstacle races, wrestling, hunting-for-sixpences-with-their-mouths-in-a-bowl-of-flour, and so on. The officers did the starting and general-managed the show; the Doctor stood at a point on the course where all the competitors used to try to run out; the Political Officer beamed as hard as he could on everything and every body preparatory to distributing the prizes, and kept at it well and truly for about four hours. The allocation of duties left me without a job—unless it were that of Assistant Beamer,—and it was felt that the requirements of the situation did not warrant such an appointment. So I studied the racing, and betted, right hand against left, on every event.

All the soldiers appeared to have entered for everything: their wives and other dependants attended and encouraged the competitors. The Emir rode on to the Ground with a small following, and his trumpeters trumpeted, and his horse curvetted, and all the world and his wife could see what a nice horse it was,

and how fine its trappings, and what a horseman the Emir. Presently, established on a silk carpet under a canopy, the Emir spent a couple of hours in polite wonderment at the sight of strapping, sweating fellows, who ran and leaped and tugged and wrestled—furiously, feverishly intent.

I remember that one of the events—one of the last events on the card that afternoon—was an obstacle race. The distance was three miles about. The start was away out in the bush, on the far side of a rocky, nasty little hill, and the course, after some comparatively easy going through a couple of streams, some swamp, and a lot of thorn thickets, ended in a two-furlong straight, with a six-foot wall to climb, and other interesting and diverting things to do and suffer. As all the starters had been running, hopping, wrestling, jumping, and so on, for some hours before the obstacle race came off, the pace was not fast; in fact, those men who finished did the last mile or so at a rate that would have got them a conviction for furious loitering. It was when the obstacle race was about half over that Johnson and I got acquainted. I felt something brush against my leg, and

looked down. The brusher was a tiny child, with nothing at all on, *æt.* four or so. He showed a mouthful of teeth, and, viewed *en profile*, bulged a good deal in front. Asked his name, he made the usual answer of childhood—stuck most of a grubby little fist into his mouth. His merry eyes did not hold any fear, and presently he took his hand out of his mouth and gripped my littlest finger in a sticky clasp. That settled it.

We watched the sports, wandering from point to point of vantage, and, when all was done, we stood very stern and straight whilst everybody gave cheers for the King. Nobody came to claim my friend, so we walked off the ground together, I making for the Club, and my mate still holding tight on to me. His hand was of a stickiness! Men at the Club were much at their ease with long chairs, long cold drinks, and tobacco, and demanded to be introduced to my guest. One's guest has to have a name, and I presented him as "Mr Johnson." Thus, having caught a friend, I did, within a couple of hours, put a label on him. A tornado came up, wind and black darkness, and thunder and flashing lightnings, and great gouts of rain. Johnson and I, he tucked under my arm, made at top speed for my quarters.

He and my dog dined with me; one stationed on each side of my chair. My Irish terrier was small, with a wonderful heart. He swam rivers in flood, cantered behind my pony when his Master rode, bit bad natives,

and there wasn't a "pie" dog of twice his weight and inches that could look him in the eye. For these reasons the wee chap was called Zaki, which means, in Hausa, Lion. By the way, I suppose everybody knows what a "pie" dog is? The name covers all those scallywag beasts—yellow, mangy, snappy, sore-eyed curs that live—save the mark—in native towns. They seem to illustrate in their vile bodies all the vices and deficiencies of all known breeds of dog. Truly an unholy and unwholesome mixture.

Mr Johnson stood guard at my left hand, and Zaki was on my right. They were both good trenchermen, and hearty catholic feeders, to whom nothing came amiss. Johnson, that first night, did himself well on biscuits, curry, roast fowl, custard pudding, and a handful of sweets. Then he arranged himself on the floor and went to sleep. He reported himself early next morning, when I was toying with a cup of tea and a biscuit. Nobody came to ask if I had found a small black child wandering, and it was only when I made special inquiry that I learned my friend was a freed slave—a kiddie found in the possession of slave-dealers, bought by them from other slave-dealers—unable to speak any language, and impossible to repatriate, because nobody knew where he came from. When the Court dealt with his owners, it turned Mr Johnson over to the care of a black clerk, a Nigerian Babu, and Johnson thought not much of what some people at home

would call his social and economic conditions, because he deserted from the clerk's household and attached himself to mine, doubtless because the feeding there was more toothsome and less exiguous.

The child grew into my establishment in just no time at all. The servants treated him with that gentle tolerance that most natives show to children. He and Zaki the terrier were on fair terms: my steward use to say that "Jom-sin," which was as near as the retainers could get to "Johnson," ate as much as five white men; and of course this made a difference to Zaki, who had been first gleaner at my table till the arrival of Jomsin. Zaki was the better mannered of the two; Johnson, his two hands full of food, mere food smeared about the front of his body, his arms, and the region of his mouth, would let tears well into his eyes and chase down his chubby greasy cheeks at the sight of Zaki being helped to part of a dish before himself. Jomsin's zeal and dash at eating led to the enacting of a rule that he should attend meals dressed in nothing, or, at any rate, in as little as possible; and he used to be swabbed down with plenty of water on the back verandah directly after each meal.

When there was no food about, Musa, the steward, loved to dress the child up in heaps of clothes. And the youngster loved it. He had a tiny scarlet fez, with lots of white muslin wrapped turban-

wise about it; he had a white drill frock-coat and long trousers; and he was tied about his middle with a scarlet kummarband; and he had a tiny sword in a red leather scabbard slung across his shoulders; and his fat little face shone and his eyes gleamed; and the wee rascal used to strut and preen and prink himself on the verandah, and loved every moment of it. But he got out of all his finery at the double on the approach of food.

I never taught him any English, but he began very soon to pick up a little Hausa. Physically he thrived (or is it *throve*?), and he had as much *nous* as a white child of twice his years; but he spoke very little. He kept his eyes open, and his fingers ready to grab, and his little legs to run; mere speech he was slow at. He used to watch for me when I was due back from the Court-house, and would come charging down the steps and catch my little finger tightly in his hand, always a sticky hand, and march me into the house. Whenever a caller came along, Mr Johnson was the first to sight him and came to report. Then, when the visitor, whether afoot or riding, had reached the gate, the wee chap would dash out to meet him and bring him in. More than once he got dangerously under the heels of a bothersome pony.

I got orders to move a hundred and fifty miles, and take over another district. We journeyed by road, and Jomsin did the distance perched atop of a tiny hill pony something

about eight hands high. The lad was getting to be something of a luxury: a special pony had to be found and bought for him, and a man had to be hired to feed and lead the beast with Mr Johnson on board. Mr Johnson sat like Mr Tod Sloan used to sit, very far forward, and a good deal hunched up. About the third day out he got hold of a stick, and there was very nearly a disaster when, nobody observing him at the time, he started laying in to his mount with the thorny end. The sun bothered him; so he was fixed up with an enormous thing called a "malfa," which is a straw hat with a wide brim, very thick and heavy, richly decorated with coloured leather, eowrie shells, and other odds and ends. Viewed from the rear, Jomsin, in the hat, on the pony, was a queer sight indeed. To any carrier or other person who jostled his pony or gave him dust, Mr Johnson spoke loudly and freely, very freely.

He took a great interest in the soldiers, and made a practice of attending most mornings at the Parade Ground to watch the men drilling. Myself unseen, I watched him one blazing hot afternoon out in the compound, near the kitchen, marching about with a stick, carried rifle-wise. He shouted commands to himself, and turned and halted and started off again with tremendous *élan*. Then he passed from ceremonial to the sterner part of a soldier's training. Carrying his stick at the trail, he began to stalk the cook, a fat queru-

lous person from Lagos. Presently he dropped flat in the sand, wriggled into cover behind a kerosene tin, sighted and aimed, remarked "boom," and startled the cook, sunning himself in the kitchen doorway. Jomsin lay, watching the result of his shot, and presently rose up, explained matters to the cook, and ordered him to lie down, drop down in fact, every time he shot at him. Ojo (the cook, *æt. prob. circa* 40) grumbled rather, but agreed: and I watched a long performance, Mr Johnson stalking the kitchen door from all sorts of angles, dropping down and shrieking "boom," whereupon the cook went down also, and expired with suitable groans and wriggles. It was a great game, and if I had been the cook, I would have seen Jomsin in — Bassa — before I would have played it.

And so we went on, until one day a wire came to say we were at war with Germany, and started a month of stress. Troops came streaming into Nafada from three points of the compass, horse soldiers and foot soldiers, signallers and doctors, machine-guns and carriers, black soldiers, white officers, and small parties of Europeans, — miners, traders, officials, — volunteers for the Cameroons Expeditionary Force. From Kano and Bauchi and Katagum and Naraguta and Pankshin they came, hundreds of miles, through swamps and across rivers and over mountains, all hurrying to the front. The two notable things in

Nafada at the time were a famine and an unfordable river, half a mile wide, full of brown, rushing, ugly-looking, angry water. All arrivals had to be fed, and had to be got across the river, and things hummed in Nafada for some weeks. Mr Johnson made his bow to and welcomed more white men than he had thought the world held. Jomsin was no snob: he trotted out and grabbed a Colonel's little finger just as readily as that of a Political Officer; some day he will grow up, and be a man of sense, and will know, and do, differently.

People were getting in at all sorts of times, day-time and night-time, and they all arrived hungry and thirsty; life for Mr Johnson was one long meal, from dawn till after dark, and he grew disgracefully fat and wheezed like a pug, and got so that he would turn up his nose at a bit of toast or chicken outlet: oake and asparagus and sardines and salmon and tinned fruit—yes; toast—nothing doing. I think it must have been during those weeks that Mr Johnson collected great part of his vocabulary. There came a day when I overheard the little chap dealing very faithfully with some labourers who had displeased him. He stood on the verandah, in safety, and told those men things about themselves, and about their relations, and about their own past and future, in good round English and Hausa mixed, that surprised me. I can only think that whilst acting host in my

place he had picked things up from the brutal and licentious soldiery. Flanders—(poor Flanders)—got the credit of teaching our men to swear, and the soldiers' backs are broad enough to shoulder the business of having taught Jomsin a thing or two suitable and useful to be said to black labourers who loaf and are not clean.

As the troops came, so they departed, at all sorts of queer hours. The weather was vile, and the country just a swamp with the rain pouring down, but Mr Johnson never failed to speed the parting braves, even as he had welcomed them when they came in. Poor wee man—I remember such a damp chilly little person that stood with me one very early A.M. in the mud and rain to see the Mounted Infantry go off. Several of his friends that went off that morning had so few more marches to do on earth.

Last—I got orders to go and join up at Yola, and was told to hurry. So I packed myself in a small canoe that had been a duck-shooting punt in happier days, and got ready to venture forth on the two hundred and fifty miles' run, down the Gongola river and up the Binue river, to Yola. Mr Johnson I proposed to deposit with a reputable citizen of Nafada, paying a reasonable sum for his keep.

On my way down to the canoe I saw Mr Johnson sitting on his host's shoulder, and I bade him farewell and got in. Then there was a

great noise—Jomsin howling, kicking, and biting, —drew blood from his mount's hand he did, and in the end I took him into the little ship, else surely would he have killed that man. Mr Johnson in a temper was a sight that people left their work and things to go and watch. Starting with plenty to say, he quickly became merely vocal without being articulate; then he stamped, followed this by running round and round in circles howling, and then subsided on to the ground, beating same vigorously with hands and heels. It was all deliberate; he watched out all the time, and missed nothing that was said or done. Thus, if you just turned and strolled away, Mr Johnson would stop, gather himself up, and go about his business quite calmly. His temper was not ungovernable, quite the reverse, but he used it, or the appearance of it, with skill and frequency, and—until people got to know of it—with entire success.

Quarters in the canoe were cramped; Mr Johnson and Zaki and I, with a couple of polers, crowded it. The bottom was flat, and there were a couple of inches of water there; I had a chair, but Jomsin and Zaki had not, and it was not really comfortable for any of us. The polers, of course, are amphibious; besides, they do their work standing up on small perches stuck outboard fore and aft. It rained and it blew, and at night we sat out on a sand-bank, with no

fire, under a tarpaulin, Jomsin and Zaki squatting between my knees. I do not think any of us were sorry when the sixth morning saw us poling up to Yola beach. I shot a few ducks on the way, and nearly lost Mr Johnson over one of them. The canoe went about to pick up the bird, and my little pal fell over the side into a five-knot current, and took rather a lot of retrieving. However, once he was back in the canoe we restored to the Gongola river a gallon or so of water *ex* Jomsin, and the little man was very soon sitting up and worrying a biscuit. After that was finished he discoursed with me upon falling into rivers.

The Gongola river joins the Binue river at a place called Numan; and in the rains, when there is plenty of water out, the confluence is impressive, particularly when you find yourself in the midst sitting in a wee canoe with a pair of native polers and Messrs Johnson and Zaki. The meeting of the waters sets up a popple, and the breeze that comes up the Binue increases the popple, and there are waves and eddies and swirls and backwashes, and snags and trees and things coming down. It is a mile and more wide, this meeting of the waters. Your canoe rocks and staggers, and the water in her slops from side to side with a nasty kind of noise, and you say to yourself, "I wish to goodness I had been a dentist instead of this." Mr Johnson took it more philo-

sophically than I did, though I do not know that his abusing the canoe for slopping water over him helped much. There was not any danger, I suppose—there seldom is—and if only one could throttle down one's imagination life would lose 90 per cent of its fearfulness.

We came in sight of Yola one afternoon late, with about eight miles to go, strong current against us, another hour of light, and a tornado threatening. We held on, and an hour after dark we got it well and truly. It was pitch black when a great flash of lightning showed us well out in the stream. The wind came howling along, thunder crashed, and rain hissed and smashed and stung. The stream broke into waves, and we began at once to ship water. The din was terrific; we could not bail, and the only thing was to make for a sand-bank. The lightning helped in this, and we beached the canoe and removed Mr Johnson in tears. The poor little beggar was hungry and wet and cold and scared—"fed up," in a word—and small wonder. The two polers were very good; they got the water out of the canoe, made her fast, and then started off in the dark to search for driftwood. When the storm had passed we got a fire going, and ate and drank things out of tins and bottles, and presently fell asleep. Morning found us on an island of sand, showing about eighteen inches of freeboard in a rapidly rising

river. We did not dawdle, and that sand-bank was out of sight very soon after we left it.

In Yola there were a lot of soldiers, and a fort and redoubts and barbed-wire entanglements, and patches of ground strewn with broken bottles, and holes with the entrance covered, so that you stepped on what looked like solid earth and fetched up several feet below the surface, neatly skewered on a spear or sharpened stake; there were all sorts of booby traps all over the place. And there were flies—sand flies and mango flies and house flies; tiny flies, small ones, medium-sized flies, and the biggest sort; brown flies, black flies, yellow flies, all of them starving and most earnest eaters.

Always an admirer of the late Mrs Partington, I engaged in war with the common enemy, and used fly-papers, the large sticky sort. One fly-paper would hold nearly three hundred flies, and a virgin paper would ordinarily take about twenty minutes to fill. Several of these papers used to lie about on tops of boxes, uniform-cases, &c., which stood lined up against the matting wall of my hut. One day the Soldier man was sharing the meal with me, Jomsin and Zaki in attendance as usual. We toyed with a roasted duck, and presently gave it best, and handed it to Mr Johnson, who headed for the open with his prize. This was too much for Zaki, always an enthusiastic amateur of roasted duck. He

intercepted the child, standing up to him with paws on his shoulders. Mr Johnson yowled and shoved, and a tear stood in his eye. Zaki, wild with excitement, spat out a succession of short, sharp barks. Jomsin, with no clothes on, holding his precious duck high above his head, gave ground before the terrier, and presently his retreating brought the backs of his knees sharply against the edge of a uniform-case, atop of which lay a fly-paper well sprinkled with flies, but still sticky. Jomsin sat down with some violence, set up a howl, dropped the duck, and burst into lamentation. Zaki seized the bird and trotted outside with it. Mr Johnson started up, and flew round and round the table and us, tearing at the adhesive and adherent fly-paper with both hands. The Soldier and I were helpless, and while the little man ran, faster and ever faster, tearing at the fly-paper, his fear turned to rage, and tighter the fly-paper stuck. Presently we summoned help, and Jomsin was shepherded "without," and there cleaned, and made happy with all that we had left of a leg of mutton.

Mr Johnson was out and out the most precocious youngster I have met. A very favourite toy of his was a garden syringe that I had collected somewhere or other. He learned to charge the thing with water, though it was nearly as tall as he, and he used to lie in wait with this engine, ready charged, and let fly at dogs, labourers, servants, anybody non-European who

should chance to wander within range of my dwelling. For obvious reasons most of the squirting had to be done from the shelter of my premises; strangers don't take kindly to unexpected squirts of water at the hands of a small child, and the wary little man feared reprisals, but not in kind: we possessed the only garden syringe in that part of Africa.

Jomsin's practice was to waylay anybody who passed near my house with food, and get a hold of it, saying that he would pay sixpence. Lots of people handed over their wares, knowing that he and I were friends, and shared a common quarter, and thinking no doubt that a person mad enough to keep such a little monster was amply mad to maintain him in sixpences. After a few weeks of this sort of thing Mr Johnson's creditors began to press for payment, and I got back to my place one day to find no end of a scene in full blast—Jomsin, well inside the hut, addressing half a dozen women and a man or two, who all stood without. He was telling them that he owed no money, had never seen their rotten food, and would infallibly tell me that a lot of common people had been invading my premises during my absence. This was the occasion that led to Mr Johnson's going forth into the bush with Musa, the steward, for best part of a mile, and there receiving correction. He used to sleep beside my bed, Zaki on the other side. One day I was pushed into hospital,

and when night came, Jomsin retired to rest in his usual place. In the middle of the night he waked, and finding his friend not there, proceeded to raise the most appalling row. He waked the General and the General's staff-officer, and lots of ordinary people. Next morning he arrived at the hospital with orders from Highest (local) Authority that he was on no account to be sent to sleep anywhere where I was not. I didn't see much of him during the first two or three days: he devoted them to getting acquainted with the hospital cook, a very capable practitioner indeed, who stood the siege of Mr Johnson's wheedlings for quite a long time before surrendering. Jomsin squirting water at empty-handed strangers, Jomsin bullying (from the secure shelter of my hut) his creditors—these, and Jomsin making up to a strange cook, were very different young fellows: such an amount of adult human nature there was in the boy.

When I got orders to take the irreducible and impossible minimum in kit and servants and join up with a column in the field, not recalling the scene at Nafada, I arranged for Mr Johnson to remain in Yola with a lady who claimed to be a relative of one of the wives of my cook. Jomsin helped me to pack, and all was peace. On a nasty wet morning I was riding out of the place, and presently came abreast of the house wherein Jomsin was to be a lodger. I saw him, sit-

ting on his landlady's shoulder, beside the road. We waved to each other, and all was well. Suddenly he seemed to go mad: the grin went off his face, his eyes flashed, and with hands and feet he started to pummel the woman about the face and shoulders, and he bit the hands that were holding him up. For a moment it looked as if he would hurl himself from her arms. However, she held on long enough to get him down to the ground without more than a slight bump. Once afoot, he came tearing along at my pony's heels; and the end of it was that he did the first stage of that trek stuck on the front of my saddle, with his wee black bullet head showing through the breast of my raincoat.

Now Authority was not suspected of sympathy with a man who went a-warring with a dog in tow. But nobody had ever considered what Authority would have to say to an Abandoned Scandalous Wretch who should take with him a dog and a small black child. The A.S.W. in question bestowed himself as far as possible out of sight. And his little private circus generally travelled ahead or behind, or to a flank of the Gorgeous Aggregation that was the Column. Those Fates who made our fortunes their special care were very decent, and sent us to sit with a couple of Europeans and a few native police and soldiers in a nice quiet little spot called Gurin. There are bananas

there, and lots of milk; it is a good place. Jomsin said so. And we all lived there very happily indeed for some weeks.

If you wait long enough something is pretty sure to come your way: and one night, as Mr Johnson and Zaki and I were dining *al fresco* in the moonlight, beside a great fire—the cheeriest, cosiest thing on earth a fire is surely—up came a native scout to say there were Germans and horses and lots of black soldiers at Beka, three miles away. So we made an end of dinner, and got our things together and started for the little mud fort a mile away. For the last time in our association I tried to spare Jomsin discomfort and possible danger by handing him over to be looked after by somebody else. The little man was perched on somebody's shoulder, and when he realised that whilst Zaki and I were off one way he and his mount were proceeding elsewhere, he started his kick-bite-howl-and-beat stunt, with the usual result. He came on to my saddle, and, what time my servants and people "went for bush," we three trotted across to the fort, Johnson and Zaki and I.

Ensued a fight—maxims hammering and bullets phutting with never a break. I put Jomsin into a sort of tunnel where the bullets couldn't get. For that reason the first few of our casualties were put there also. Jomsin didn't like the company, and presently broke cover and startled every-

body by wandering about in a small space where bullets were coming fast. The little wretch understood nothing of what was going on, and refused to come under cover: said he had lost his gown and was looking for it. So he had to be fetched, and was dumped down at the foot of the mud wall, into comparative safety, with some violence. A fresh attempt to go and seek his gown was nipped in the bud, and Mr Johnson was for whimpering. It was getting on for 10 A.M., the sun was climbing up, and though the wall gave fair shelter from bullets if you sat as close to the ground as Jomsin did, it held the sun off not at all. Further, a thing happened that Mr Johnson didn't recall as having happened before: there had been no breakfast. Even Zaki sat pensive, and Jomsin presently gave way and openly snivelled.

I once read in a book about explorers or miners or some heroic fellows of that sort, that the toughest and hardest of the band—the old bull—magnanimous, tireless, wise, never moved without a tin box of super-peppermint lozenges. It was not said in so many words that his prowess and success derived from the peppermint lozenge habit, but the inference was there for any youthful and enthusiastic reader to catch hold of. I caught. And so, when Jomsin whimpered, I presently found him peppermints from a pocket in my bush-shirt, and the little fellow was comforted. Zaki, poor

fellow, could make nothing of a peppermint, and when he thought to examine it at leisure, Jomsin intervened, and Zaki was left wondering what had happened to the wee white thing that had been staring at him from the ground a small moment before. The row of the shooting was abominable—bullets hammered at the wall and through it all the time; and they came over the top, and from a flank, kicking up a great dust; and over all the sun rose ever higher and hotter.

Mr Johnson presently gave tongue again; this time it was a drink of water he wanted. Now, there were a number of poor fellows lying where they had fallen at the foot of the wall. And twenty yards away across the open, in a safe place, were three great earthen pots of water. The water had to be fetched, and fetched it was; and if you will try for yourself you will note that an earthen jar holding some five gallons of water is not a thing you can rush up to, gather in your stride, and turn and spring back with. Not at all. Still, all three jars were safely brought in, and the carrier of them didn't get a scratch even. And so the wounded, and Jomsin, got their drink. And Zaki too. Poor old Zaki—he was served last, and didn't protest; older than Jomsin he was, and his manners infinitely better. Soon after the dog had drunk he started up and dashed off at top speed, and I didn't see him again for a couple of days.

At noon the Squareheads gave up the fight and went

away. Then came a tornado, dust-storm, terrific thunder and lighting, and crashing downpour of rain. I remember wondering whether I had dodged a bullet just to get into trouble with a flash of lightning: one's nerve gets very shaky, I find, after a few hours of battle. Heaven knows how those stout fellows in Flanders carry on.

Mr Johnson was having an eventful day, and it tried him. No brekker, compulsory sitting still in the sun for many hours, a horrid noise, terrible sights crowded close about him, and now a tornado. For a time Jomsin was one of the chief of my preoccupations. We survived the storm, and the burying of the dead, and the cleaning up of the wounded, and a worrying night of darkness, during which we waited for the Huns to come and overwhelm us with the bayonet (only Jomsin never knew anything about that). Next day was a topping day, sunny and cool and bright and fresh, and early in the forenoon came pricking across the plain the advanced troops of a column come to relieve us. The Colonel was a great fellow in every way, six feet and inches over, ever so many stones weight, with a big voice and a big hand and a big heart. Mr Johnson stood in the gateway of the fort, and when the Colonel dismounted the wee chap saluted him gravely, hitched himself on to his littlest finger, and trotted along beside him, showing the way to a chair. The

Colonel and he were great friends, luckily for me, seeing that it is not usual for men in a war to go about with a small encumbrance of the kind; not for men as unimportant and getting as small a wage as I do, anyhow.

Zaki turned up later in the day. One of my servants had been caught by the Square-heads when they ran into my house shortly after I'd left it. His new masters put a load of loot taken from the town on the man's head, and took him off with them. On the way Zaki joined up, and Umoru and he forgathered. When it got dark, the pair of them, with the load of loot, "evaded themselves" in that beautiful French phrase, and went and sat on top of a high crag, whence they surveyed alike the country and the enemy column. Giving the Huns half a day to get clear, the two came down from the crag and in due course reported themselves, still with the bundle of loot, at the fort. Umoru was an observant cool fellow, and much that he had to say interested the Colonel, who in the end said he was a good lad and might keep his bunch of loot. The German commander had had him tied up alongside one of his maxims when it was in action, and

Umoru had done some good tall lying in answer to the gentleman's questions. Told him we were an hundred and fifty strong inside the fort, and so on.

That ended Mr Johnson's active service experiences. When I was invalided, and started on the month's journey in a canoe down the Binue river, he had a good time. Plenty of everything to eat, and dips over the side all day and every day, and rushing after duck that I shot, and once mounting astride a fifteen-foot crocodile, dead not five minutes from a bullet just behind the shoulder. That was a glorious experience, one that perhaps will live in Jomsin's memory long after he has forgotten Zaki and me. Parting time was come. My poor terrier was the first to leave. He wasn't young, he had had hard times, the sun worried him, and he grew a temper. Sometimes he waked us up at night, suddenly getting up and wandering about barking. And he got to snapping at people. Then one morning when we were together he changed altogether, and Musa passed in a revolver and poor old Zaki died.

And Mr Johnson? Well, he and I went our ways too. And I came Home alone.

FP.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

IN THE NAME OF CIVILISATION—SPAIN TOO PROUD TO MEDDLE
—A PRESAGE OF BETTER THINGS—FANATICAL CHAMPIONS OF
NATURAL SCIENCE—THE PRACTICE OF GERMANY—AN ORGY OF
"INTELLECTUALISM."

THE rumours of peace, which, during the last months, have seemed far more dangerous than the war, are at last happily lulled to sleep. That we shall hear more of them is likely, since it is clear that the Germans have had enough fighting to last them for a generation or two. It is equally clear, from the admirable replies which the Allies have given to their enemies and to President Wilson, that we shall make peace in our own good time and not before. Meanwhile we may look back with satisfaction upon the perils from which we have escaped. About the proposal, which Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg made with tears in his eyes, there hangs no mystery. It was a mere trick of war, which failed of its effect. We do not pretend to understand the motives which prompted President Wilson to make a sudden appearance among the peace-mongers. We can only hope, for his own sake, that he was driven into error by some whim of domestic policy. However bitterly we may resent being turned into the shuttlecock of somebody else's democracy, we can still acknowledge that it is not easy to govern a hundred millions of cosmopolitans without making frequent concessions to their greed or their folly. But we confess that we

cannot understand President Wilson's desires that the belligerents should confide in his neutral ear the objects for which they are fighting. We have been at war for more than two years. With painful iteration we have affirmed and reaffirmed our objects and our purposes. If they are not known to President Wilson, they are surely known to all the rest of the world, and it seems to us that we are being asked to waste our time once more in the dissemination of words, words, words.

And though we have not refused, as the Germans have refused, to explain for the tenth time some of the causes for which we fight, we cannot put them all into plain terms, because the main issue of the war is, and must be, moral rather than material. When Germany flung her armies upon an unprepared Europe, she told us with wearisome insistence that she was fighting for Kultur. She would be satisfied with nothing less than the imposition of her hideous system of thought and morals upon a debauched and beaten world. She wished also to make herself mistress of the universe. But that hegemony would come of itself. What was of the first and last importance was Kultur, and the well-drilled slaves of the German

Press were not permitted to make a secret of it. In 1914 we did not know accurately what Kultur was, and the British professors who hastened to bring aid and comfort to their foes refrained from explanation. The devastation of Belgium and France, the murder of thousands of innocents, burned libraries, ruined churches—all these things have revealed to us the true meaning of the hated word. And now that we have made the discovery, the Germans have been ordered to renounce Kultur as a cry of victory. Killed by the sinister laughter of all men, it has perished—as perishes, sooner or later, every species of hypocrisy. But the mere fact that it was once an ideal which conquering Germany might have realised, shows us the reign of terror from which we have escaped. And as the Germans made their unprovoked attack in the name of Kultur, so we stood upon our defence in the name of civilisation. We are fighting (and we shall win) for the independence of will and thought, for the right of every nation to live and train itself as it thinks best, for the freedom of untrammelled genius, for variation against monotony, for individual growth against the drill-sergeant, for the lofty traditions of our race against a uniform slavery of mind and habit—for all those things for which our ancestors bled and fought upon many a stricken field. But how can it help President Wilson to be told again the moral objects of our warfare,

if he does not know them already? Iteration will not bring understanding, and he gives us in his Note a definite cause to believe that he has not even begun to understand, after two years, why we will never sheathe our swords until victory is achieved.

Truly there was no statement in President Wilson's Note which aroused so bitter a controversy as the statement that the two groups of belligerents professed to be fighting for the same objects. To pretend to find any sort of analogy between those who broke the peace and those who defended themselves against aggression, between those who invaded Belgium and those who went to Belgium's aid, between those who have outraged all the laws of war and those who have upheld as best they might the rules of chivalry, is to carry neutrality to the point of complete insensibility. The Allies repudiate, with what energy they may, the mere suggestion that any sort of analogy is possible. They decline for one moment to share the responsibility of the past, or to accept for the future scraps of paper by way of guarantee which will be torn to pieces as soon as ever our adversaries deem it convenient. Between the Allies on the one side and the Central Powers on the other there is fixed a wide gulf of broken faith and outraged codes, of ugly crimes committed in the name of warfare, of judicial murders, of deportations and enslavements, across which the hand of trust and friendship

shall never reach. So much must be said in our own vindication before we consider President Wilson's Note, and the mere fact that he permitted himself to make so rash a statement renders his motive in addressing us at all still more dimly mysterious.

For suppose that we took President Wilson's advice, and made with Germany an inconclusive peace, leaving her in the enjoyment of her present strength and still firm in the resolution to prepare for another war and the final triumph of pan-Germanism, what would be the future of the United States? Germany after the war will be a needy power, whose best chance of recuperation will lie in an act of piracy. What country is more tempting to the pirate than the richest country in the world, the country which has accumulated a vast store of wealth while we in Europe were fighting for our lives? There is no doubt to which coast the greedy Germans would turn their eyes and their ships, and since adequate "preparedness" is not yet the first point in the policy of the United States, the task of replenishing an empty treasury at America's expense might not be beyond the power of an unbeaten Germany. Moreover, the Munroe doctrine remains in force; yet the United States would not find it easy to repel a German invasion of Brazil (let us say), if our adversaries, still unbeaten, looked towards South America for new markets and fresh enterprises. How, then, should a

drawn war profit the United States any more than it would profit Europe? And it is only a drawn war which the peace of President Wilson's suggesting could contemplate or ensure.

The best parallel, inverted to be sure, to President Wilson's action, will be found in the loyalty with which the nations of Europe encouraged Abraham Lincoln to finish the war between North and South after his own fashion and in his own time. The inconvenience which that historic struggle imposed upon the neutral countries was far greater than any which the United States may plead to-day. And what happened? The operatives of Manchester, starving for lack of cotton, sent to Lincoln a message of hope and sympathy. They did not ask the belligerents to put down their aims and objects in writing; they did not hint that these aims and objects were very much the same on both sides. They supported gladly and chivalrously what they thought was right, and earned for their country the gratitude and the friendship of Abraham Lincoln. It would have been better, we cannot help thinking, if President Wilson, before he sent his Note across the ocean, had looked more closely to the history of his own land, and had considered by what tradition of good feeling and good will England and the United States were then bound together.

In all this welter of peace and peace-talk there is one

country which refrained its hand most nobly from interference, and that country is Spain. That Spain, injured in her just pride—and she yields in pride to no country—should have played into the hands of Germany, was in no way to be expected, and her refusal to have anything to do with the plottings of peace does her the highest honour. She has suffered much from the injuries and insults of Germany. She has seen her ships sunk by submarines in defiance of the code which governs respectable peoples. To her was addressed—to her, a nation of gentlemen—the Kaiser's lowest threat. When certain Spaniards, who possess estates in Belgium, purposed to sign a letter of protest, William II., who understands not the obligation of kingship, and who has worn a crown in vain, pleasantly suggested that, if the protest were signed, he would cut down the old trees in the Spaniards' parks and send his roughest soldiers into their châteaux, who would deface them as only the base soldiers of the German Army know how to deface beautiful things. After this there was no need of signatures. The protest went forth, unsigned, and doubly efficacious, since it had drawn from the Kaiser such a confession of rage and degradation as no other monarch has ever made. And these insults, these injuries, are not the only ones of which Spain has been the pitiful victim. Ever since the war began her capital has been packed with German spies, who have threat-

ened, cajoled, and levied blackmail with ceaseless assiduity. These emissaries of the gentle Kaiser have done their best to put a finger in every pie. They have interfered with the politics of a country whose guests they were, and at last the Prime Minister of Spain was forced to retire from an intolerable position. His retirement was but momentary. With the support of his King he took up his office again, and thus was enabled to administer such a rebuke to the Germans as even they, thick-skinned as they are, might appreciate. But, harassed and insulted, Spain refused to meddle in the intrigue of peace, and she has earned by her dignity and her suffering the loyal admiration of all the Allies.

And now at last President Wilson has got at least half of what he asked for. While Germany pretended that she had conveyed her terms of peace secretly to Washington, the Allies, if not more wisely, at least more cunningly, inspired, have sent their proposals to the United States plainly and openly, so that all those who, for some reason or by some negligence, did not know them, may plead ignorance no longer. It is a document with which they who framed it may be satisfied. It is at once conciliatory towards the United States and jealous of the rights and dignities of those who have signed it. It gives a benevolent approval to the vague plans of international police, of which we hear a vast deal to-day, and which we shall forget on the

tomorrow of peace. It challenges with a direct simplicity the analogy which President Wilson drew between the two groups of belligerents, and it briefly schedules the outrages committed by the Central Powers—outrages which will stand firm between us and an inconclusive benevolent peace. It points to the calculated policy of aggression by which Germany and Austria-Hungary sought to ensure the hegemony of Europe. "By her declaration of war," it says, "by the instant violation of Belgium and Luxemburg, and by her methods of warfare, Germany has proved that she systematically scorns every principle of humanity and all respect due to small States." And then it asks: "Is it necessary to recall the horrors which marked the invasion of Belgium and of Serbia, the atrocious treatment undergone by the invaded countries, the massacres of hundreds of thousands of inoffensive Armenians, the barbarities inflicted upon the peoples of Syria, the raids of Zeppelins upon open towns, the destruction by submarines of passenger liners and merchant vessels even under neutral flags, the cruel treatment inflicted on prisoners of war, the judicial murders of Miss Cavell and Captain Fryatt, the deportation and enslavement of civil populations, &c.?" The list is long and incomplete, but it will explain with perfect lucidity the protest which the Allies feel themselves bound to make against an obviously false analogy.

And lastly, the Allies find no difficulty in setting forth once again the aims which they will reach before peace is made and signed. Briefly stated, they include the restoration, "primarily and of necessity," with all the indemnities which justice demands, of Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro; the evacuation of all occupied territories; the reorganisation of Europe, "based alike upon the principle of nationalities, on the right which all peoples, whether small or great, have to the enjoyment of full security and free economic development"; the restitution of provinces or territories formerly torn from the Allies, including, of course, Alsace-Lorraine; and the exclusion from Europe of the Ottoman empire. They are objects worth fighting for; and now that they are plain to all the world—as they might have been a year ago—we may forget all about the rumours of peace, and concentrate all our energies upon the active conduct of the war.

And we face the war with a higher heart, because we have confidence that the new Government has thrown aside for ever the pitiful ideals of the debating society. A conclave of twenty-three no longer stands between us and the possibility of victory. Mr Lloyd George and his colleagues are not content with words. They mean to act, and are acting with promptitude and resolution. The many projects which Mr Asquith kept carefully "under

consideration" are now accomplished facts, and we shall not fail of our purpose because we are waiting for something to turn up. Moreover, the new combination has in it all the seeds of life and success. At last is realised the hope of Disraeli and Young England—the wise junction of Toryism and labour. For two generations the working classes have allowed themselves to be used and exploited by middle-class Liberalism. They have prostrated themselves ignorantly and willingly before the name and fame of Richard Cobden, the politician whose constant and acknowledged purpose it was to get the better of them. The movement for the repeal of the Corn Laws was, as Cobden confessed, a middle-class movement. It was far more deeply interested in low wages than in cheap bread, but though the Chartists were bitterly opposed to Cobdenism, as was just, the Cobdenites presently befogged the working classes with delusive words, and have held them in bondage ever since. In vain did the Tories appeal to their natural allies. An idle suspicion, fortified by much false talk about black bread and small loaves, kept labour and Toryism apart, and it needed the stress of a great war to make and to cement the long-hoped-for union. The advent of Mr Lloyd George to power, his wise choice of colleagues, and his prudent exclusion of those Liberals who formed part of the late Coalition, are presages of better things. Henceforth

we may expect the country to come before political ambition; we may look forward happily to be governed by the just necessities of patriotism, not by self-interest and copy-book headings. Already the worn-out maxims of sixty years ago are forgotten, and Cobdenism has succumbed at last to the imperious demands of a great war. Better still, we are asked to assist at the funeral of that middle-class Liberalism which did its best to weaken the country, which squandered the public money on the purchase of votes, and which thought that national security should always be subordinated to the single ambition of tenancy of power for life.

Ever since the war began certain fanatics have given full play to their foolish humours. They have confused *post* and *propter* after their customary fashion. They have found a thousand reasons why we were not prepared to meet the Germans on the field of battle, and did not hit upon the only true reason—that our self-interested rulers did not deem it profitable, at the hustings, to prepare for war, and locked up the knowledge of Germany's intentions in their own timid breasts. And of all the causes alleged for Germany's initial success, the first and foremost was Germany's love of science. If only we had not wasted our time in studying the classics, it was said, the Germans would never have declared war. All the old sayings of the Gradgrinds and Dryasdusts were trotted out and given a fresh run for

their money. The world was reminded of Mr Cobden, the wise man, who declared that one copy of 'The Times' contained more useful knowledge than the whole of the historical books of Thucydides—a safe assertion to be made by a demagogue, who knew only one limb of the comparison. Other words of wisdom from men peculiarly qualified to speak were quoted in confirmation. Sir H. H. Johnston, we were told, had put the ancient Greeks firmly in their place. "The philosophy of Plato," says this *savant*, "a thinker who knew nothing of the earth but a small bright patch round the Eastern Mediterranean, . . . is scarcely worth our attention to-day except as an interesting point in the progress of human thought. Can we seriously go . . . to Thucydides and Xenophon for accurate history?" This last question, thus ingenuously put, destroys whatever claim Sir H. H. Johnston thinks he has to discuss Greek literature; and he is kind enough to expose his ignorance further by solemnly assuring us that he is "personally greatly interested in Hellenistic studies." We do not know how he could be interested in anything "impersonally," and we are still wondering what he thinks is the meaning of the "Hellenistic studies" which have aroused his interest. But perhaps it is idle to ask one who finds Thucydides and Xenophon inaccurate, and who believes that "Hellas" may be dismissed in a few hours' reading or lecturing, to make his meaning clear. We may be content

to put on record one of the most fatuous pieces of criticism that it has ever been our lot to encounter.

The first attack upon the classics was led by certain men of science, and led so badly that it repelled itself. The men of science seemed so sure of their case that they did not trouble to get it up. Coming before the world as trained observers of facts, they convicted themselves of an obvious confusion. In the first place, they complained that we had not enough scientific graduates to do the work of the country, and in the same breath demanded that greater weight should be given to science in the examinations for the Civil Service. A very easy method of wasting what science we have, to bury it in the routine of Government offices! What would then become of research, of the application of science to commerce, of the millennium, in fact, which is promised us by the most ardent of the partisans? And even here the champions of science showed themselves indifferent to the claims of truth. They represented their pupils as excluded by an unfair system from the emoluments of our public offices, and they had not taken the trouble to find out that in 1913 the first and third places in the Civil Service Examination were held by men of science, and the second place in 1914.

Again, it was pointed out to us that the Germans owed their superiority to the scientific training which was said to be universal in their country. On

all sides we were urged to learn a lesson from the enemy. And if only the partisans of science had been at the pains of making a few inquiries, they would have found little support in Germany for their heresy. Mr Livingstone, whose 'Defence of Classical Education' (London: Macmillan & Co.) is a perfect armoury of fact and argument, has set forth the truth with the utmost lucidity. He tells us that the yoke of classics was not removed from the Germans until 1901, so that all those who fight against us to-day have suffered the burden. And even now that the yoke may be removed, it is worn voluntarily by many thousands. "Of 400,000 boys receiving education in Germany in 1911, 240,000 were at schools in which Latin is compulsory, and 170,000 of these at schools where Greek is compulsory also." There is not much comfort in these figures for those who would abolish the classics from our schools. And the worst is not yet told. Even in the purely modern schools of Germany science does not reign supreme: "Only two hours out of twenty-five are allotted to it in the lowest

forms, and six out of thirty-one in the highest."¹

Nor do the Germans themselves believe that the partial abolition of the classics from their universities has been a success. Ten years after the change for the worse began, the Philosophical Faculty of Berlin University recorded its deliberate opinion of the trial that had been given to the new system. Here is an extract from the report, quoted in Mr Livingstone's book: "It is emphasised by the instructors of chemistry that graduates of *Realschulen* (Modern Schools) do not stand upon the same level with graduates of *Gymnasias* (Classical Schools). Professor Hoffmann observes that the students from the *Realschulen*, in consequence of their being conversant with a large number of facts, outrank, as a rule, those from the *Gymnasias* during the experimental exercises of the first half-year, but that the situation is soon reversed, and, given equal abilities, the latter almost invariably carry off the honours in the end; that the latter are mentally better trained, and have acquired in a higher degree the ability to understand and solve scientific problems." That needs no comment.

¹ This practice of Germany receives the highest support of two English professors of science—Messrs L. C. Miall and A. Smithells. "Science has won her place in the schools," they write, "and is more likely to tyrannise than to be tyrannised over. . . . Man cannot live by science alone. . . . It is unsuitable that science should occupy a very large share of any schoolboy's time. It would be unwise to lay down the law for all cases; but we can hardly imagine any circumstances which would call for the devotion of more than one-third of the school hours to science, except for a very limited term. One-third of the time seems to us extreme, not a normal concession to science. The school must aim at developing the whole man, and not one faculty only."—'Falernian Grapes,' edited by W. Rhys Roberts, p. 73.

It is the settled opinion of a distinguished man of science, and a German to boot.

Nor did Professor Hoffmann stay his hand at this pronouncement. He proceeded to declare "that all efforts to find a substitute for the Classical Languages, whether in Mathematics, in the Modern Languages, or in the Natural Sciences, have been hitherto unsuccessful; that after long and vain search we must always come back finally to the result of centuries of experience; that the surest instrument which can be used in training the mind of youth is given us in the study of the languages, the literature, and the works of art of classical antiquity." There is no shuffling here, no half thoughts, no ifs and ans. The statement is clear and unembellished, and it may confidently be set in the balance against the loud assertions and loose arguments of our men of science. In truth, every country which has jettisoned the classics has bitterly lamented its temerity. In France, for instance, whose students may take a bachelor's degree without any tincture of the classics, and where Professors lecture at the Sorbonne upon Aristophanes to those who do not know, and never will know, any Greek, a similar regret has been made, characteristically enough, by the men of letters. The men of letters complain, with perfect justice, that the virtual suppression of Latin and Greek has had a pernicious influence upon French style; that the younger generation, which has

grown up without the classics, writes its own tongue with culpable negligence; that its prose is composed without logic and without shape; that mixed metaphors are to be found in every article and upon the page of every book that are the work of the Latinless, Greekless mob. Not long since the poets and writers of France, firmly convinced of the wrong done to their country by this wanton separation from the past, bestirred themselves to restore the ancient languages to their place of pride, and it is to be hoped by all those who reverence the glory of French literature that they will succeed.

For true it is that there is no better method of attaining a consciousness of modern languages than by a study of Greek and Latin, and if our literature is to survive the strain and stress of commercial greed, we shall best preserve the purity of the craft by keeping our eyes fixed upon the ancient models, which have never been surpassed. For this reason alone it would be worth while to fight our hardest for the preservation in our schools and colleges of the old methods. But there are many other reasons why Latin and Greek are worthy the stoutest championship. If we discard them, we destroy all the traditions of our race. Whether we like it or not, it is to the corner of the Mediterranean, so bitterly despised by Sir H. H. Johnston, that we owe all that is ours, except the dross of life. In that corner our poetry, our prose, our arts, our sciences,

our laws, all took their origin. If we cut ourselves wilfully from the past, everything that has been thought and said and done for two thousand years and more will be of no avail. We shall compel ourselves deliberately to begin life anew with each generation; we shall strive and cry in a barren wilderness of "material progress"; we shall date from our own generation the beginning of "the march of mind"; and we shall settle down into our boots of folly with no better guides than Mill and Cobden, and the followers of the false, immoral science known as political economy. Can a worse wantonness than this be imagined? Here is accumulated for our use and profit the wisdom of all the ages, and we are asked to throw it aside for the sake of "practical" life and a full pocket, and we are asked to do this by those who know nothing of the problem which they pretend to solve. What are we to say of one intelligent reformer who urges us to discard Greek for Hindustani, without knowing in the least what sort of a thing that modern hybrid is?

And there is another reason why a nation brought up with no knowledge of the literatures of Greece and Rome must perforce be inhuman and bewildered. According to the commonplace of Pope, and Pope's commonplaces are seldom false, "the proper study of mankind is man." And the study of the classics, as we have pointed out before in these pages, and as Mr Livingstone explains with admirable lucidity, shows

us man in the best aspect of wisdom and courage. Even if we are so grossly material as to despise the beauty of the Greek drama, the perfect economy of the Greek tongue, the casting away of the unessential, which is the characteristic of Greek style and Greek art, we may still allow that we can find no better method of self-knowledge than in a knowledge of Greek history and Greek heroism. The Greeks, who "saw life steadily and saw it whole," remain unto this day the best teachers we shall ever find in the art of life. The world has been made by Sophocles and Thuoydides, by Plato and Plutarch. From the works of these masters we have drawn the laws which still govern us and direct us aright. If we wantonly cut ourselves off from them, we should do ourselves a wrong, which centuries of fumbling in the dark after new gods would not right. And it is with a sincere feeling of relief that we see signs that the classics have won the first round in the contest initiated by the fanatical champions of natural science. For that the classics will win we can to-day feel comfortably assured.

There have been of late many congresses, at which education has been discussed, and it cannot be said that they have thrown a vast deal of light upon a dark problem. There was, for instance, that orgy of "intellectualism," known as "Education Week," whereat many things were said and very few decisions were arrived at. The

president of all the teachers was Professor Gilbert Murray, who should have been suspect at once, since he fills the chair of Greek in the University of Oxford. It is difficult to understand why his many admirers tolerate one who professes to teach the heathen tongue. But, despite his manifold disadvantages, he was pleased to smile a qualified approval upon our public schools, for which "he held no brief." Why, indeed, should he hold a brief for these pitifully antiquated institutions? His *obiter dicta* was less satisfactory than his defence of the schools. We do not like his purposeless eulogy of Viscount Haldane of Cloan, "the most high-minded and learned educationist"—what a word!—"in public life." Now, we protest with what emphasis we may against Lord Haldane's interference in the education of Great Britain. We have had enough of Lord Haldane. He has failed in whatever he has touched. He permitted us to tumble unprepared into a war which he knew was coming. He has deliberately informed us that he took no better steps to defend the Empire because the voters did not want to defend themselves. If he cannot move until he is pushed by the people, then his "high-mindedness" and his "learning" count for nothing. If our education is to be reformed, we would choose as its reformer a scholar who is not content to reflect the whims and wishes of the proletariat, who knows what is just and right, and is prepared

to ensue it for no better reason than that it is just and right. The truth is we do not trust Lord Haldane, and we hope to hear no more about him. He might fill the leisure which is left him by writing the life of his sympathetic friend Herr Ballin, or of that other friend, the Kaiser himself, "the true child of the time spirit."

Again, Professor Murray is greatly troubled because in Scandinavia and elsewhere the English are not well understood. Foreign shops are full of German books, and England is known chiefly as the source of popular novels and the home of Charlie Chaplin. Well, if the Swedes and Norwegians think this about us, what does it matter? If they have not yet discovered England, let them send out their Columbus. If Columbus had stayed at home, America would not have come to his heel. Indeed America might have remained undiscovered, and then we never should have had President Wilson's Note—"the greatest event in diplomacy," says an American, "since Austria's ultimatum to Serbia." And that is a deprivation which we cannot contemplate without a shudder. But it is not by such *obiter dicta* as these that Professor Murray will justify himself or serve the cause of education. Latin and Greek are worth fighting for, and it is not the least of the moral benefits conferred upon us by the war, that it has routed the scientist and set the study of literature once more upon a firm foundation.

“DONE IN.”

“On January 12, 1915, a strong German force, with guns and machine-guns, secretly concentrated against Jasin, and although every effort was made to relieve it, I regret to say that the post, after expending all its ammunition, was compelled to surrender. I am glad, however, to report that in these operations the Indian and African troops fought with great gallantry.”—*Extract from Lord Lucas's speech in the House of Lords, April 1915.*

THE sleeping British camp on the Umba river lay still in the velvety darkness of the African night. Here and there a glimmer of light showed through the chinks of the grass huts occupied by the white officers, and at one or two points you could just make out in the darkness the figure of a sentry standing behind the parapet of the fortified camp, while in a corner two tarpaulin-swathed bundles showed the presence of a pair of mountain guns, the famous “screw guns” of the Indian frontier.

In the early days of the war guns were scarce in East Africa, and since the arrival of this section of “A” Mountain Battery the little force on the Umba felt that it was indeed a “force of all arms.” True, there was no cavalry, but then tsetse-fly settled that problem, and in the coast belt “shanks his mare” is the only recognised method of progression, if we except the enthusiasts known as despatch riders. These were certain brave sportsmen who, mounted on motor-bikes, used to tear about the country over what the East Africans were pleased to call roads. The stranger in the land would have described them as very well thought-out obstacle courses, and indeed at most athletic meetings they

would have been suppressed as over dangerous. Looking back on it, bravery seems a poor word to describe the superb lack of the very rudiments of fear or prudence, which must have been the basic quality of these adventurous spirits. Of course, once across the border their necks were safer, for the methodical Hun having here as elsewhere diligently prepared for war, there were roads on which infantry could march in fours.

During the last month or two of 1914 the invading Germans had been chased out of the large slice of British East Africa that they had occupied. It was done more by stratagem than by actual strength, for in those days the enemy was always many degrees stronger than us in men, and infinitely stronger in the chief weapon of close-country warfare, machine-guns; and so the little campaign had been primarily one of wits, in which the British General had come out top, with the result that British posts at intervals of several miles had been established on the Umba river, the real frontier between British and German territory in this part of Africa. The posts varied in strength, but what was known as the Umba camp was the strongest of all, for it consisted, as I have said, of a

force of all arms, more or less.

Besides the section of guns already mentioned, there was a whole section of a Signal company, mustering nearly a dozen Tommies and as many Indians; there were two companies of the King's African Rifles, Soudanese these, perhaps 180 rifles in all; there was a double company of an Indian infantry regiment, the "White Tufts"; a double company of Kashmere infantry; and nearly two double companies of Imperial service Sikhs. One way and another, after deducting sick, of which there were no end—for the sick-rate in the Umba valley, with its reeking mangrove swamps, is very high—the fighting strength of the little force must have been about that of a weakish battalion, but for an African side-show of those early days that was almost an army. Lastly, *but far from least, there was the Staff, at present sitting in the biggest of the grass huts. The feeble lamp threw its radiance on the smoky atmosphere of what the members of the Staff and the British officers of the Indian troops described in their moments of enthusiasm as "The Mess."

There were nearly a dozen officers sitting round the room talking and smoking. Firstly, there was the general, a lean wiry man, who had soldiered up and down the coast of Africa for the greater part of the last twenty years. As a subaltern many years before the present war, he had fought over this very ground against

the Arab slavers, who were led by a blood-stained villain named Mobaruk. This gentleman had eventually avoided capture by a timely escape into German territory, where he sat down just over the border and spent his time in metaphorically making faces at the British Government. The instant war broke out, friend Mobaruk took up arms for his faithful ally, Wilhelm II., and was over the border raiding, looting, and ravishing in the most time-honoured style, so that quite a lot of people were looking for him very assiduously; but for the moment having destroyed a couple of villages in an even more complete fashion than usual, he was resting on his laurels in the ever hospitable refuge afforded him by the exponents of "Kultur."

Spectacles and a pipe gave the general a very mild air as he sat under the lamp poring over some papers, and from his benevolent appearance one would never have surmised that he was one of the finest fighters in the camp, and there were some pretty good fighters present there. In reality he was one of those generals that the British soldier adores—a "fighting" general,—a man willing and ready to make a last appeal to the bayonet in a tight corner, or anywhere else for that matter, for he was what the subalterns termed with affectionate phrase a "Thruster." He wore no red tabs or medal ribbons, of which he had a pretty collection, and his

badges of rank were conspicuous by their absence. His get-up consisted of a plain khaki shooting-coat, khaki breeches, and cloth gaiters topping stout marching boots, and his general appearance was that of a lean but kindly country squire.

Talking to him was the chief intelligence officer, who previous to the war had been a civil officer in the local administration, and a mighty hunter before the Lord. He was looking forward eagerly to a chance of hanging Mobaruk for several murders of harmless villagers, not to mention small details like "war treason," &c.; but Mobaruk was in no way so kindly disposed towards him, for slow mutilation with an old saw was always more his line when dealing with hapless captives. The intelligence officer's dress was like the general's, only more so. That is to say, he wore no coat, only a khaki shirt and trousers. He always preferred slacks to breeches and puttees, as they were cooler, and he held a theory that thorns didn't catch in them so easily. A large-size automatic pistol was usually hung on one side of his belt to counterbalance the weight of the out-size pipe that invariably hung from the other, and if the Hun were likely to be in the vicinity, a stalwart ebony henchman bore behind him a sporting rifle of particularly large bore. What the *modus operandi* was to be we never quite gathered, but apparently the stalwart, who on hunting expeditions did gun-bearer, performed the

same duties in war; and after all, a chief intelligence officer can hardly be expected to carry his own gun and yet uphold his status in the eyes of his swarthy underlings.

The remainder of the staff consisted of two doctors, a brigade-major *cum* staff captain *cum* A.D.C., a regular maid-of-all-work sort of a G.S.O. in fact; and a very young subaltern named Greene, of the Supply and Transport Corps, which is the Indian equivalent of the A.S.C. He had only arrived the previous day from the base, and was burning with excitement at the prospect of seeing real war.

In the corner of the hut of rough timber and grass matting were seated the C.R.A., in other words, the subaltern in charge of the two screw guns, and the subaltern who supervised the score of Tommies and sepoy who laid out the telephones. Being specialists they didn't mix with the more common herd, but discoursed mysteriously in corners about ranges and angles, Forward Observing Stations, and other technicalities.

The chief topic of conversation was the recent abortive attempt of the enemy to recapture the Jasin post, an advanced post of the Umba Force which had been planted in German territory some two miles away as the crow flies, but somewhat farther as the track went, for one had to cross two arms of the river, not to mention a small tributary. It was garrisoned by a double company of the Kashmeris who

had just relieved the Sikhs, and a short while before the relief some 600 German troops had swept down on the post and attacked with considerable vigour. The garrison had stalled them off till later in the morning, when a column came out from the Umba camp and, reversing the rôles, had chased the enemy some way back towards their fortified post at Duga, twelve miles or so farther on.

The fact of the British flag waving over a portion of the Great German Empire hurt the feelings of the German commander of those parts not a little, and it burnt like vitriol into the only tender part of Mobaruk's constitution, his purse, for he owned a fine flourishing garden in the outskirts of Jasin, which naturally he was unable to visit at present. Such a case called for immediate attention, so the German leader assembled his legions—to wit, about 1500 black troops, a couple of white companies, and a levy of malcontent Boers who had quitted South Africa after the Boer war—and with Mobaruk and his gathering of 200 or so fine Arab out-throats to lead the van, the hosts of Germany prepared to "do in" Jasin post, and hoist once more the banner of the Fatherland over this piece of debateable ground. Scanty rumours of their preparations had filtered through, and the General was even now reading the Intelligence Officer's report on the subject.

Reinforcements were badly

needed, and an even more pressing need was machine-guns, of which the force only possessed three, and one of these had been lent to Jasin. About this time there was some small bickering going on in the vicinity of Ypres and elsewhere in Flanders, where the threadbare British Expeditionary Force was hanging on like a limpet to hard-won positions in the face of all the odds known to gods or men, while Lord Kitchener was busy producing armies from nowhere, as if by magic. Another Indian force was making triumphant progress in the Persian Gulf in spite of heavy odds, and Botha and Smuts were "collecting" German South-West Africa. All these required machine-guns *ad lib.*, and consequently East African side-shows had to do without for the moment, but men were expected "later on." Hence reinforcements could only be obtained by altering the dispositions of the actual troops on the spot and thinning the less important or less exposed places. When a general is holding a front of 500 miles with a force of about a division, less the usual complement of artillery, it is, as may be imagined, a difficult thing to find reinforcements. But it had been done, and some 400 Yaos of the King's African Rifles were even now on their way down by steamer to the Umba valley. Lack of roads and railways in this part of the theatre of war compelled most of the movement of troops and stores to be

carried out by sea; the forward progress of the force being accompanied by a continual shifting of bases from mangrove-fringed creek to mangrove-fringed creek. The Marine Transport Officer who went prospecting for bases, generally ahead of the troops on land, led a chequered life sounding up and down muddy creeks with Brer Boche potting at him from the banks. Nevertheless he persevered with his bit of string and a lump of lead, and wherever the force got to, within an hour or so the sun-peeled countenance of the M.T.O. would appear beaming on the scene to report that he had found a practicable landing-place for the supplies. Seldom has a better earned D.S.O. been awarded.

Since the Huns' last attempt on Jasin half of the double company of the White Tufts had been sent out to swell the garrison of the post, and as a further precaution the other half was to go at dawn next day. The next morning should see the arrival of the Yaos, good stout-hearted little fighters, and owning two machine-guns.

So the General and the Staff retired to bed feeling that everything possible had been done. It was no good blinking the fact that the enemy, if he should come down, would be in much greater strength; the only thing was to try and keep the ball rolling to the best of one's ability, put a cheerful face on things and hope that the enemy would

not turn up until the reinforcements had arrived and the defences been completed, a state of mind very common in the outer parts of the empire at the beginning of the war.

The signalling officer coming out of the mess hut walked over to the little lean-to where a Tommy sat by a telephone in company with a sepoy. The two were occupied with an old copy of the 'Sphere,' and conversing in their weird lingua franca, each firmly convinced that he was speaking the other's language in the most idiomatic way. As the officer came up the Tommy rose, tucked the end of his cigarette behind his ear, pulled a pencil out of a fold of his puttees, and reaching for a pad of message forms, said to the sepoy—

"'Ere, boy—call up *karo Jasin—Sahib ata*—an'dontcher forget to *bolo āsti*, 'cos the cove at the other end sez 'e can't 'ear—*nahin suna—samja?*"

The sepoy grinned his assent and rang up—

"Allo!! Faiz Khan!! Faiz Khan. Allo!! allo!! . . . Sāhib āgie—puchhte kih sab kuchh khariat hai kih nah . . . Achchhā, bhāi."

The signalling officer asked, "All well, Smith?" and the Tommy replied, "Ahmed Din's calling up, sir, 'e's just got through. 'Ere, Ahmed, all clear?—*Sab barabar, janta?*" to which the sepoy answered, "Sab thik hai—*all righ—very good!*"

"Good night," said the signalling officer, turning away, thankful that so far every-

thing *was* all right. Telephone wires are tricky things at best, and his had been out once or twice of late. When one end of a telephone is a small weak post on the edge of an enemy's country, with the enemy known to be close by in superior numbers, and the other end some miles away, the prospect of a midnight ramble into the forest to patch up a damaged wire is not of the most delightful; especially when the enterprising gentlemen who cut it are probably lurking in handy cover, with the idea of abolishing the unfortunate who comes out to repair the damage.

The signalling officer passed a somewhat restless night, and at dawn came round again on a tour of inspection. On his way over he passed the White Tuft company just starting off for Jasin. They seemed strong in Indian officers, and questioning the adjutant who was giving them final instructions, he found that the subadar major and the native adjutant, having nothing to do in camp now that the last company of the regiment was going off, had obtained a reluctant permission to go out with them for a day or two. The White Tufts were very split up, because two double companies were garrisoning a post about twelve miles farther inland in company with a levy of friendly Arabs, and one double company was busy land-grabbing in Mafia Island about 250 miles down the coast.

He watched them move off in the faint dawn light and

then went on to the signal hut. Getting on to the telephone, he called up the Commander of Jasin post, whom he knew would be then standing to arms, and asked how things went.

"Pretty quiet all night; one or two shots by the sentries at the usual enemy scouts—hyenas probably, or perhaps a lion," came the answer.

About half an hour later he called up again to ask the Jasin people to report immediately the White Tuft company arrived, and was informed that there certainly did seem to be a German patrol in the vicinity, as in the now fairly full light a sentry had just fired at two men he had seen moving in the bushes. "He was quite positive about it," said O.C. Jasin. . . . "Hulloa! there's some more shots. Hold on a minute, old man, while I go and see what it is. There was a strongish patrol reported a couple of days ago, and we might get a chance of bagging them."

The signalling officer put down the receiver, and, pulling out a cigarette case, lit a cigarette, waiting for the other man to come back. After a minute or two he put the instrument to his ear again and heard the faint far-off sound of a few rifle shots, followed by a heavy little burst of fire. Then suddenly came the unmistakable "Rat-tat-tat-tat-t-t-t" of a machine-gun, obviously quite close to the distant instrument. Evidently O.C. Jasin was "getting a chance" at them this morning.

Suddenly the signalling officer's face grew graver, and he appeared to listen more intently. In the receiver, amongst the sounds of the firing which had become fairly heavy, he seemed to be able to distinguish what appeared to be the sound of several machine-guns somewhat farther away than the bulk of the firing. Then the faint persistent sound was drowned by a still heavier burst of fire, evidently from the defenders, and the maxim in the post started off again quite unlike the faint thready sound he had been listening to. Then . . . silence.

"Hulloa! . . . Are you there? What's up?" he called. No answer. Again and again he called, with always the same result.

"Damn!! Cut again; looks like trouble." And hastily despatching a party to try and locate the fault, he ran off to tell the Staff officer that Jasin was disconnected again, and, as far as he could tell, there appeared to be quite a pretty thing in scraps in progress. He had hardly finished speaking when a messenger came in from the picquet on the Umba bridge, reporting sounds of very heavy firing in the direction of Jasin, and just then a slight breeze carried down the distant rattle of musketry.

The camp began to stir, and every one turned out. The men had only just "stood down," after the "stand to" which is the invariable proceeding at dawn, in war, if one is in proximity to the enemy. It means that every

available man lines the defences and is ready to repel an attack for an hour before dawn and at dusk—favourable moments for an attack on the part of an enterprising foe. During these hours the whole line of the "Perimeter" (the defensive work constructed all round the camps of small isolated forces in enemy country) is lined by men fully armed; while in the centre of the camp crouches the general reserve or "inlying picquet," whose sole duty is to come in with the bayonet if any point of the perimeter is carried by the enemy.

Orderlies went flying round the camp with orders to keep the troops under arms until something definite was known, and an officer was sent down to the river picquet to get definite information. Presently the repair party sent in to say that they had got a little way across the river and found the bush swarming with enemy, and would wait at the Bridge-head with the picquets until they got further orders. They also reported the firing towards Jasin as being very heavy and continuous, and that there appeared to be quite a lot of machine-guns at work—a fact which the people in the camp were beginning to be able to distinguish with their own ears.

The General looked at the Staff officer, and the Staff officer at the General. "It's come," he said.

"Turn out every available man," said the G.O.C. "We

must leave a minimum garrison to hold this place, and push out to Jasin at once. Send down to hurry the disembarkation of the Yaos, and fetch them along after us. It may be only the same show as last week, but it's more likely to be their full strength this time."

Very speedily the troops assembled, and after deducting the necessary garrison to hold the post, a garrison reduced to the very minimum, the force mustered outside the camp, an army consisting of the section of screw guns, two double companies of Sikhs, and two companies of the King's African Rifles (these are the old companies of 100 each), perhaps 550 fighting men in all, with two machine-guns. The double company of Kashmeris remained to hold the post.

The little force pushed off across the river, but before it started two notable volunteers sought out the Staff officer, begging for permission to accompany it. They were Greene of the S. and T. Corps, and "the only Browne," so-called to distinguish him from all the other Brownes, a subaltern attached to an Arab company at a post some way farther up the river. He had arrived by steamer from Mombasa the day before, and was to march up to his company to-day. He begged to be allowed to go, saying that there were very few white officers with the Indians, and that another would be most useful, and, as he spoke Hindustani, he was the very man they wanted. (He had once been

on a steamer that had touched at Bombay, and he had spent a few days at the "Taj," hence this plea.) Permission eventually being accorded, he raced after the Sikhs, now half-way down the slope to the river, but before he had gone a quarter of a mile he was seen to stumble and go head over heels into a bush. On being extricated, he was found to be bleeding profusely from a wound in the thigh, and was carried back to the camp. Thinking it over, he must have been hit by a chance shot from the high ground across the river, probably by a sniper in one of the high trees, but even then the nearest Hun could not have been within 1500 yards. And so an end of "the only Browne," but, as he cheerily explained while hobbling about the hospital ship afterwards, for he was of a most irrepressible cheerfulness on all occasions, "It saved me having to speak Hindustani, and I only know about three words."

The column crossed the river, and had not far to go before it was clear, from the unholy uproar in the direction of Jasin, that the "Squareheads" had come down in force. A little farther on, the leading troops reported enemy *ad lib.* in front. So the British commander said "Attack," and thus opened what was locally known as the Third Battle of Jasin. It was evident from the din in front, and more especially from the incessant maxim fire, that the main German force in the district was out, and that meant something round about

2000 men and from 15 to 20 machine-guns, and probably guns as well. Therefore the British commander who had come out to relieve the post said "Attack," and the 550 cheerfully attacked, after the manner of British troops, without the ghost of a hope of reinforcements (except the aforesaid Yaos) turning up for at least twenty-four hours, and more probably forty-eight or seventy-two.

What subsequently transpired was that the enemy had surrounded the post with about 600 men and four or five maxims, sufficient to keep the defenders quiet, for the garrison of Jasin was even now under 300. The "White Tuft" company had fallen into the enemy on their way out, and, making a rush for it, most of them had got through into the post, the enemy's encircling dispositions not having been quite completed. But the maxims had taken toll of them during the process; the Subadar Major, somewhat lame from an attack of rheumatism, in sprinting for the entrance of the post saw the man on either side of him go down dead as he flung himself into the doorway after the remnants of his command.

Between the river and Jasin the ground rises in a long, steep, cliff-like bank about thirty feet high, and along this position was disposed the bulk of the Hun force, some 1300 or 1400 men with a dozen or more machine-guns, their object being to defeat any attempt to relieve the post. On

their right was the mangrove swamps and the sea, and on their left was the unfordable river. The country is thick, tropical vegetation, with high palm-trees and, in places, groves of plantain-trees. An advance in line is practically impossible, and one is thus forced to move in small columns, deploying at the last possible moment, and the difficulties of communication can be left to the imagination.

The Soudanese formed one column and the Sikhs the other. They pushed their way forward in the face of an increasingly heavy fire from the unseen riflemen in front, and at last the Soudanese actually succeeded in getting their machine-guns up the steep bank, where, however, the detachment lost so heavily that they were forced to fall back almost at once. The Indians found the enemy in force along their bit of front and tried to go in with the bayonet, but, needless to say, never got there, their only British officer being shot in five places, and with him went down practically the whole of his staff, senior Indian officer, adjutant, &c.

But the Sikhs, though thus checked, hung on, and the Africans fell back into line with them to gather their forces for another blow.

The untimely fate of "the only Browne" should have deterred the young S. & T. officer, but not so. He begged and prayed and beseeched the Staff officer for permission to go, said he had no work in camp that day, and had never seen

a shot fired, and that in a show like this every British officer was wanted. At last, in desperation, the Staff officer said—"Do you know anything about bombs?"

In Africa we are, or rather were in those prehistoric days, more or less gentlemanly in our methods of warfare. We shot each other with rifles and machine-guns, on occasions we endeavoured to bayonet our opponents, and sometimes we fired guns into the bush in the supposed direction of the enemy, but it was not considered a very sporting thing to do by the best people. Gas and bombs we had never heard of.

But one day there descended on the Umba Camp a Sapper. Now this tribe, as we all know, if not married or Methodist, are distinctly eccentric; and this particular sapper had a more eccentric eccentricity than most,—he was an anarchist. For a couple of years before the war he made a certain cantonment in India hideous with sulphurous fumes and explosions, while his subalterns spent most of their spare time in hospital having pieces of bombs pulled out of parts of their anatomy where bombs are not supposed to be carried. When he came down to the Umba he brought with him a green canvas bag of bombs, rifle-grenades of his own special kill-at-both-ends pattern.

He had a display of them and fired off one, while a crowd of sepoys, a few Tommies, and some officers stood a quarter of a mile off, and, according to their rank and nationality,

said—"Wah!! Wah!!" or, "Blime, Bill, Crystal Palace, not arf!!" On his return up country he left the grenades with the Staff officer, who stored the bag in the office hut. One is forced to the conclusion that the Staff officer was not over-fond of his clerk.

Greene replied with fervour that he knew all there was to know about bombs; been brought up with them, so to speak, played with them as a child; in fact, if there was one thing more than another in the army that he really was well up in, it was bombs of all sizes and shapes. (As far as we could subsequently ascertain it was the first time in his life he had ever seen one.) So the Staff officer, who had once been young and keen,—for that matter he was still exceedingly keen,—let the boy go after handing him very gingerly the bag of bombs, and giving him an orderly to carry them, and the special rifle from which they were fired, and Greene raced off after the column.

An hour or so afterwards the sentry reported a stretcher with a sahib on it returning to camp. When it entered the perimeter the anxious little group who met it recognised the young S. & T. officer, very pale from loss of blood, but still full of go, while behind him walked the orderly with the green canvas bag, for he had got "pipped" long before getting into grenade range.

The troops now got their second wind, and advanced again, though considerably

weaker than the first time, and the enemy of course showed no sign of weakening; but the one chance of saving the Jasin garrison consisted in vigorously assuming the offensive, for even if the foe could not be routed, at least he might be forced back sufficiently far to allow of the beleaguered garrison breaking out. The actual possession of the post itself mattered little, because there was no large accumulation of stores to fall into the Germans' hands, and the unhealthy Umba valley would in any case have to be evacuated shortly with the approach of the wet season, when neither side would be likely to try and hold it. In fact, the General had been out there only the previous day to consider its evacuation. What mattered was that the enemy should not be able to capture the garrison itself, and the troops went gallantly forward again, while once more the inferno of lead hissed and moaned and whipped about their ears. The mountain guns, pulled by crews of porters, savages of the most naked type, had got into action and were blazing away merrily into the parts of the bush where there appeared to be most probability of browning something, since aimed fire was almost impossible at anything more than point-blank range, where a gun stands small chance against a couple of riflemen. One of them, however, while advancing through the bush, came up against a Hun maxim at almost point-blank range. The question

was as to who should get in the first shot, and the screw gun did so with a direct hit. The pieces of that machine-gun can hardly have been worth picking up.

Again the Soudanese won to the top of the cliff, and again they were forced back by the appalling fire; but the Sikhs, left in charge of only one officer, and he an attached one, failed again to get through, and, fighting doggedly, fell back to the original position. It was clear now that the enormous disproportion of strength gave no particular hope of success, and the relieving force settled down awhile to await the coming of the Yaos, whose first company presently arrived.

The attack was renewed again with this accession of strength, and for the last time that day the Commander of the Soudanese got his machine-guns up on to the bank. The whole force put in the last ounce of their strength, and the arrival of the Yaos put new heart into the outnumbered British force; but the odds were too heavy, and the Germans beginning to realise the weakness of their opponents commenced to counter-attack, and the force fell back, slowly covered by the Yaos, who were naturally the freshest. This time the Soudanese machine-gun remained on the bank, for the good and sufficient reason that the detachment were all laid out. Not surprising, considering that the enemy had six to one in maxims against it. So an African colour-sergeant went

back and brought the gun away, apologising, as he joined his C.O. in a spitting shower of lead, for not bringing the tripod as well; but as he explained it was very heavy, and a new one could easily be made in Mombasa, while a mere tripod was of no earthly use to the Germans.

By now, despite the arrival of the Yaos, things were looking distinctly "rocky"; three attacks had failed, casualties were heavy, and the enemy was beginning to work round the flanks, having realised that we were not so strong as our vigorous attacks had at first led him to suppose. Reluctantly the order to withdraw was given, and slowly and sullenly the force fell back towards the river, hoping against hope that Jasin post would be able to hold out long enough to enable the reinforcements to come from up country. That the enemy had been handled pretty severely, despite his being on the defensive, was clear from the cautious way he followed up, and the mere threat of a counter-attack sufficed to make him abandon the pursuit.

When the General realised that the Germans had really come out in force, he was faced with a nasty problem admitting of several solutions, each one of which might be right, but if wrong pregnant with trouble.

On the face of things it appeared that the Huns wanted to retake the bit of territory which we had captured, and had put out their full strength to do so; but there were also

several other possibilities. It might be only a feint to induce us to draw in the posts higher up the river, thus giving them the opportunity to cross in strength, and spreading round behind isolate the British force from Mombasa, or perhaps make a swift raid on that town itself, only some seventy miles away.

Again, Jasin could be shelled quite easily from the sea, and if the Germans got it they could be pretty sure that we would get up a warship and make it very unhealthy for them; and we had a big cruiser quite handy guarding the mouth of the Rufigi river, where the *Koenigsberg* lay hiding, for it was before the days of the monitors. So perhaps the whole scheme was to induce us to bring up the cruiser and thus give the *Koenigsberg* a chance to slip out and have a last dash at our commerce, and, still more important, at our transports, of which the Indian Ocean was pretty full at the time, for the Australians were coming over in large numbers. It was the time of the spring tides, and that is the only time a big ship like the *Koenigsberg* can cross the bar of the Rufigi, so it was clear if she didn't get out this week she would have to wait a good while before it would be possible again, even if there were no British vessels waiting outside to give her a warm welcome.

So the General took deep thought; for though he knew that the Huns would be glad enough to capture the post,

they would doubtless be still more glad to sink a transport or two, and he had to try and fathom what they were really at. The upshot of it all was a wire to Mombasa requesting reinforcements with all possible speed, and the cruiser to come up at once. Before the message had quite got through the wire to Mombasa was cut. It was subsequently discovered to be a cow which had tangled itself in the wire, but for the moment the harassed staff at Mombasa took it to be another trick of the wily Hun.

Early that afternoon a breathless clerk stumbled, panting, into the camp of the White Tufts at Mombasa, where the sole representatives of the regiment were dozing away the hot African afternoon. The Major was fast asleep, and the clerk thrust the message into the hands of a captain who was reading in a deck-chair. There was only one double company in the place, for the rest of the regiment were down on the Umba. This lot had just returned from assisting to plant the British flag on Mafia Island, and there being nothing doing the men had been given the afternoon off to go down to the town, which lay about two miles distant from the camp, in order that they might replenish their little stock of comforts in the way of soap and cigarettes and matches, &c., and generally enjoy the delights of civilisation before returning to the "Front" again.

The Captain read the chit, expecting to find the usual request for a nominal roll of all men who had been issued with more than one pair of bootlaces, or a request for the reasons why he had drawn three tins of apricot jam in lieu of two of plum and apple and one of marmalade, or some other equally vital information such as the hearts of staff clerks delight in. As his gaze travelled over the paper he leapt to his feet, upsetting the chair, and tore round to the Major's tent, shouting as he did so to an orderly to call the Subadar as quickly as possible.

"Chit from the Staff office, Major," he shouted as the Major turned over sleepily to see what the disturbance might be. "Big show on the Umba; lots of casualties; heavy fighting in progress, and wires cut. We're to get off sharp with every man we can lay hands on. I'd better send down to the town and collect every one as fast as possible. We're in for a proper picnic this time, I fancy." The Major, thoroughly awake by now, tumbled off his camp bed and pulled on his boots. "Right oh, I'll be ready in five minutes. Tell the mess servants to get us some grub packed, and to have a meal ready in half an hour; heaven knows when we shall get the next one."

The Captain, turning out of the tent, ran slap into the arms of the Subadar, and proceeded to issue orders with all speed. In five minutes messengers were flying down

to the town to round up all the men they could find, while the officers busied themselves in getting together the necessary stores. They both had a certain experience of hurried shows, and knew that the boat could not start for a couple of hours at least, and therefore it was no good trying to get down to the harbour quickly by scamping preparations. So they collected every article likely to be of use if the show was a long one,—above all, taking every round of ammunition that they could lay their hands on. As the Major put it, "With a full stomach, a full haversack, a filled water-bottle, and a well-stocked bandolier, a man can do wonders." Before they had finished their preparations the men had begun to arrive. The company cooks had been hard at work getting some food ready, as well as lots of *chupattis* for the men to put in their haversacks; and these were all issued out so that no man should have to land with an empty stomach, which is the best-known recipe for finding trouble.

While the two officers were sitting down to the "high tea" in the mess tent, the officer in charge of the base depot, who was temporarily reigning at the Staff office, came over. He was a Scot, of the type who is always addressed and spoken of as "Old So-and-So." He was full of excitement, and fuller still of news of a sort—the sort that invariably is to be found in rather critical situations when reliable infor-

mation is not forthcoming. Further, he was full of envy at the "White Tufts'" luck in getting off to another scrap, for he was primarily a regimental officer, and only a Staff officer because at the time the African show started his own regiment had not been detailed for service. Now that they were hard at it in Flanders, he was regretting that he had not stopped with them.

"Hulloa! M'Whuskey," said the Major, as the Staff officer entered, "what's doing? Your chit was somewhat sketchy, to say the least of it. Got any more news? Sit down and cool your fevered brow with a drink."

"Sorry, can't stop, Major; heaps to do. I only just ran over to find out how soon you would be ready to start; you're wanted badly."

"We'll be ready as soon as ever you can get your old tin kettle ready to take us down. Which is it this time?"

"The *Weissman*. She's loading ammunition and hospital details as hard as she can, and as soon as that's finished she can start. When will you be on the quay? The lighters are ready now."

"How long will you be over the ammunition and hospital? I'll have my push ready as soon as you want, but I'd like the men to have a meal first, if there's time. There's no point in going down early if we've got to twiddle our thumbs for a couple of hours before she starts, when we might be having a square meal here."

"Can you be down in an hour's time? The loading will be practically finished then, and you can get on board at once, and she'll start almost immediately after that."

"Right you are. Sure you won't have a drink after all?"

Three-quarters of an hour later saw them on the quay filing into the lighters to go on board the steamer. She was a little captured German tug which the navy had pinched from Tanga, and served as a sort of mail boat working between Mombasa and the Umba to carry sick and wounded and stores. She was about half the size of the smallest type of Thames excursion steamer, but she boasted two cabins and a dining-saloon with four seats.

M'Whuskey, who had come to see them off, dropped down the gangway waving them good luck as he went, and just before the tide turned they slipped out of the harbour and steamed south along the coast. The Major and the Captain stood on the little forward deck looking at the receding shore and drinking in the cool salt air, for the sunset breeze was just springing up. Behind them in the well-deck the sepoys were hanging over the bulwarks watching the land grow faint as the steamer inclined out seaward. The "White Tufts" had been so much on board ship of late, more particularly this double company, that they had got almost accustomed to it, and despite the fact that they were all Rajputana men, practically

none of whom had ever seen the sea before they enlisted, they had long got over the depression which the sea always seems to implant in the Indian's breast the first time he ventures on a ship.

After a scratch dinner and a drink, the officers retired to bed in the stuffy cabin which they shared, to get what rest they might. The *Weissman* raced along at her maximum speed of about seven knots, and the skipper said, on being asked, that he hoped with any luck to make the Umba about dawn. Neither of the two were excessively cheerful, for the absence of news and the item "Very heavy casualties" was not exactly cheering, because they had had rather more than their share of the casualties up to date; and with a mess reduced by two-thirds, the prospects of still further empty seats was not exactly calculated to raise the spirits. Nowadays messes are sort of caravanserais, where people come and go, and the probability is that the oldest inhabitant has not been there much more than a month or two, and the members can count their weeks of acquaintanceship on the fingers of both hands. But in the early days of the war things were far otherwise, and when after a fight you look round the mess-table and find that half of the people who have made your little world for the last seven or eight years are gone—the men you have worked with, played with, quarrelled with, as only men who have sojourned

together in the waste corners of the world can love or quarrel — you really realise what war means. This is particularly the case in a native regiment, where the *camaraderie* is probably greater than in the average English unit, for the simple reason that it often happens an Indian unit finds itself for two or three years together cut off from all European surroundings outside the immediate circle of the mess; and when out of a total strength of fourteen or fifteen white officers you eliminate the four or five at home on leave, the remaining eight or nine cannot fail to become very intimate; and in the mess the differences of rank cease to be the bar that they perforce remain in an English unit, where you have thirty or more in mess at once, and all sorts of outside interests as well.

Darkness fell on the camp on the Umba river, and night covered with her kindly black mantle the red traces of the day's work and the staring upturned faces in the bush, mute witnesses to the horrors of the protracted struggle. The continuous rattle of musketry had given place to intermittent shots here and there, where the outposts and patrols, their nerves strung to the highest tension, saw—or fancied that they saw—lurking forms in the shadows.

Only in the direction of Jasin post was to be heard the heavy roar that marked

the storm centre of the strife. It was heaviest towards the Sysel factory—a detached post on the Umba side of Jasin, held by a platoon of the Kashmeris. They were cut off from the main post, and ammunition was fast giving out. The Huns, convinced that it was only now a question of time before shortage of ammunition would compel the hard-pressed garrison to give in, contented themselves with ringing the factory. One or two charges, repelled with heavy loss, had convinced them that the waiting game was the one to play. It might have been with troops of less mettle than these, but the men from Jammu had no intention of spending their days in bondage to the Germans. The commander of the post in the factory saw clearly that another rush of the enemy could not be beaten off with the small number of rounds left; so he decided on the last desperate resource of all brave troops, who would rather die than surrender,—an appeal to the bayonet. And collecting the survivors of his platoon, he gave orders for them to charge out; and those who got through were to make for the river and try to get across to the Umba camp. All being ready, they flung themselves out of the post, and with bayonet and butt and kukri stormed out on the enemy. Some went down ere they reached the foe, but of the remainder over half broke their way through; or the

sheer daring of the action seemed to paralyse the German askaris for the moment, and the bulk of them won across the river successfully, eventually reaching the Umba camp.

In Jasin post itself ammunition was running low, but the garrison was hanging on the hope that the morrow's dawn would see the relieving column break through. Surely reinforcements must be even now on the way down; and if the British force, which they knew to be so weak, could put up the attack that they had done to-day, then two or three hundred more men would surely turn the scale. So they set their teeth, and prepared to see it out to the best of their ability.

In the landing station of Ngoa, down-stream from the Umba, the overworked doctors were busy patching up to the best of their ability the crowd of wounded, and doing their best, with their scanty resources, to lighten the sufferings of the uncomplaining men. Around the landing-place a circle of outposts lay in the darkness, eyes staring into the gloom and ears atune for the least sound that might give warning of the coming of the enemy, for *surely* he would attack. By now he must know how weak we were, and would make the most of his chance before help came.

Every now and then the darkness would be pierced by a vivid splash of flame, and the silence shattered by the crack of a rifle or the "phitt,

phitt" of a bullet or two. The wounded lying helpless on the ground lay if possible still flatter, except here and there a man or two who would have welcomed a kindly bullet to quiet the awful pain. But the rest wanted no bullets, all they wanted was to get down the river on to the boats away from the noise of bullets and the occasional shells that the Germans sent over. It is nowise an interesting way of spending your night, to lie like a helpless log listening to the whine of the bullets, and the rifles of your own men replying; and to watch the grave faces of the men round as they talk in low undertones, while you know that if the enemy does get through you are physically unable to crawl a yard to get away, and the askari as a class has little respect for Geneva Conventions and none for a wounded enemy.

And so the long night dragged on until the first faint light of the dawn set the stretcher-parties to work loading their charges into the boats.

In the growing light of the morning the "White Tufts" found themselves off the mouth of the Umba river, and saw lying a little way farther off a big cruiser, and a B.I. steamer that was used to transport stores and sick and wounded between Mombasa and the "Front." Pulling out of the river over the bar they also saw a long line of ship's boats, and one look through the glasses showed all right that

"casualties were heavy," for thwartways on each boat lay several occupied stretchers, and between them could be seen the forms of men swathed in bandages.

A steam pinnace puffed up alongside, and the M.T.O. (him of the lead and string) swung on board. "You're to go on shore as soon as possible, but I'm afraid you'll have to wait for the tide to turn so as to let the dhows come across the bar." The steamers were not able to get over the shallow bar at the mouth, and in consequence the journey up to the camp had to be performed in dhows or ship's boats. "That's the last tow of boats coming off now, and one of them has stuck on the bar. We shall have to wait several hours yet."

"What's doing?" queried the Major.

"Hell of a fight. The Germans are all round Jasin, and we've not been able to break through. They're at it hammer and tongs now. You can hear it once you get up the river. They've got guns up, too, and were shelling the camp all yesterday afternoon, but very luckily didn't succeed in hitting anything."

"Who's holding Jasin?" asked the Captain.

"The Kashmeris were, but I heard yesterday that a double company of your people had gone out to reinforce it. I'm afraid it's touch and go, because the Germans are mighty strong this time, and it will take us three days or more to get reinforcements

down from up-country. What have you brought?"

"All we had," said the Major, "but it's only 150 odd, worse luck."

"Well, so long. Get the men and ammunition on to the dhows as soon as they come along. The hospital section is for the B.I. boat now. I'm just sending a tow for them." And he tumbled down the gangway into the pinnace.

The Captain lit a cigarette reflectively and looked at the distant shore—

"I suppose it's poor old B Company this time, for the others are up at Bwaga Macha. Just our bally luck."

The hours dragged on until the turn of the tide allowed the dhows to slip out and come alongside, and they hastily loaded in the ammunition and as many men as they could into each dhow. The Major got away in the first, telling the Captain to get every one off, and wait till the ammunition was all off and then follow. It was well on towards sunset before he got away, and the sun had already gone down before his boat pulled alongside of the little landing-place at Ngoa, where the stores and men for the Umba camp were disembarked. He found a picket of the Kashmeris, mostly Gurkhas, defending the landing-place, which was rather over a mile from the camp. They looked very downhearted, and he started talking to the Indian officer while the boats were being unloaded. The

news appeared to be vague, but the gist of it was that the post had been taken, and that a double company of Kashmeris and a double company of an Indian infantry regiment had been lost with the post.

The Captain tried to get more details, but the man's information seemed very sketchy. Eventually much questioning revealed the fact that it was undoubtedly the "White Tuft" company, and the Indian officer seemed sure that all the officers of the regiment in the Umba camp had been with it.

He further said that if the Captain wanted to get in that night, he had better send on and warn the camp, because every one was a bit jumpy, and the arrival of an unexpected party in the dark would certainly lead to shooting; so the Captain hastily commandeered one of the Gurkhas to run on and warn the camp, for he knew that it was impossible to get up before dark, as he had a good deal of stores, and the track through the mangroves was always muddy, and the tide having turned, parts of it would be knee-deep water. Eventually all the ammunition was loaded up on the porters, and the ghost-like line melted away in the darkness. No enemy were encountered—not that there was any likelihood of a large force on this side

of the camp, but a patrol might have been met; and it was with relief that the Captain at the head of the little column saw in the gloom ahead the formless blur, which showed they had reached the fortified camp—relief accentuated by the fact that the sentries craning out into the darkness made no attempt to shoot.

The news that the three remaining officers of the "White Tufts" had been with the company had depressed him not a little, and having deposited the loads inside the camp, he was disconsolately making his way in the dark towards the mess hut, when a familiar figure loomed up out of the darkness. He stopped short, staring: "Hulloa, 'Canny'! heard you were scuppered. Where are the others?"

"Not much I wasn't. The C.O. and I weren't out, by the grace of God."

"What about the rest? I heard they were in Jasin, and that the Huns had got the post."

"It's true, worse luck. The whole of B Company, and several of the regimental staff as well, including the Subadar Major, were out there, and the Huns have got the whole boiling this morning. Damn the . . . It's no good crying over spilt milk though; come and get some food."

"GANPAT."

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THE SCENE OF WAR.—VI.

THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE OURcq.

THE Battle of the Ourcq was one of the most impressive and vital of that series of engagements from Paris to Verdun, which in their entity are known as The Battle of the Marne. It was an attack in flank on the German Army so dramatic in its character that it has deeply impressed the imagination of men. How Von Kluck swerved from Paris at the *last* hour, how Gallieni rushed his garrison up to the Ourcq, in 1100 taxi-cabs, and how Maunoury drove the Huns across the river into the arms of the advancing British,—these are become a legend, and savour of the romance of war.

There is no battlefield of these two years that is more legible in its compact and impressive details.

I turned aside from Senlis with the express purpose of following as closely as might be the line of the German swerve, and the principal incidents of those five

fierce days from the 5th to the 10th of September 1914, when the fortunes of France were on the turn.

The Forest of D'Ermenonville lay upon our right, dark and sombre upon the horizon. The road to Nanteuil le Hardouin stretched before us through the open fields, a highway of war. We could see that an army moving across the undulating plain from the Oise to the Ourcq must take this way. It was a soft autumn evening with grey clouds in the sky, and a deep silence lay upon this corner of France. We met no travellers on the road. Yet the place was peopled with memories, and with the mind's eye one saw upon the road the grey legions of the invader as they moved upon their way.

From Nanteuil we continued on to Betz, which is some seven miles from the Ourcq, and thence we turned at a right angle, moving parallel with the

river, towards Meaux. Here as nearly as possible was the axis of the battle, though it passed through many phases of attack, retreat, and counter-attack during its momentous progress. The turning took us, I remember, into a golden lane that might have been the approach to the Castle of the Sleeping Beauty, it was so still and perfect in its repose. The trees seemed to be holding their breath and the world under a spell.

Thus we came to the neighbourhood of Villers St Genest and the monument that has been raised here to the dead of France. It stood by the wayside, on the rise of the superb plateau which was the field of Victory, and the graves of the brave filled the landscape, under the lifting edges of the clouds. There were not one or two but thousands; and the black crosses were like an army in mourning amidst the gilded splendours of the sky. Wherever the battle had gone, there lay the French dead: solitary in the tilled fields, in serried ranks and masses where the fight had been hottest.

This monument is one of the first of those tributes that France will raise in stone and marble, in poetry and song, in the imperishable records of her people, to those who died for her in the Great War. No doubt it is well from his own devilish point of view for the Hun to carry War with its cruelties into the fields and homesteads of other lands, but there is at the least some compensation for the French Man in this, that when he is dead

he sleeps at last in his own soil and in the care of his own people. And France is caring for her graves: wherever a man lies dead there rises a cross, and the little Tricolour flutters beside it. The plough turns aside when it reaches a grave; and the old peasant woman with her hoe amidst the turnip-fields makes the sign of the Cross upon her breast when she pauses relentless in her toil.

There was hard fighting here as late as the 9th of September 1914, when the Battle of the Marne was almost won. The German rearguard attacked at Antilly and Betz to cover the general retreat, and an unlooked-for brigade suddenly came down from the north along the Nanteuil road, compelling the French to beat a retreat. But the orders of General Joffre were imperative. The enemy was being driven back all along the line of the Marne, and it was essential to press him to the utmost upon his flank. A supreme effort was necessary, and weary and worn though the French were by the continuous fighting of four days, they fell upon the enemy and forced him to give way. It was upon this luminous plateau, where the graves lie so thick, that they fought.

Near Villers St Genest the road runs through a little wood, and here again it was evident from the scattered graves, the barbed wire, and the broken walls of the châteaux by the roadside, that there had been close and bitter fighting. We turned aside through Acy-en-Multien, one of the pivots of the battle,

to visit Rosoy, a little village in the valley of the Gergogne, where it runs down to meet the Ourcq. It lies here in a sheltered hollow, concealed from the eye, and apt for a hospital base, for which purpose it was used by the enemy. Eight hundred of his wounded were left here as he fled across the Ourcq.

"How many of the Germans were here?" we asked the women of the village—the men, as all over France, being gone to war.

"How many?" they replied; "a hundred thousand. They committed every villainy, except murder. It was always, 'Madame! Madame!' and a revolver at your head; and, 'bring out your eggs and fowls.' *Ces cochons*. The shells went flying over our heads to Vincy; the aeroplanes passed up and down; oh! we remember those days. And then they went off in a hurry, leaving their wounded to be looked after by our people. 'Madame! Madame!' and always the revolver; but we hid our eggs; ha! the Boche did not get those."

She was a splendid old woman this, with the face of a Roman, who spoke for the party, with an indignation that was superb in its expression. Beside us rose the grey old church of the village, with its crown of fleur-de-lis over the portal; beside it a farmyard in whose inner courts we saw more duck and geese and fowls than I have ever seen together in one habitation—the hidden eggs had evidently made good—and in

the small Place under the walls of the church there stood a group of the village boys, with bright smiling faces, the hope of France. Sixty, seventy, eighty years hence, they will tell their grandchildren of how the Hun came to Rosoy and stole the poultry and ran off leaving his wounded, and of the War as they saw it during those eventful days, through the eyes of children.

From Rosoy we went to Vincy and Etrepilly, whose houses were in ruins, and thence a little to the west, to the farmhouse of Champ Fleury, in a commanding position on a hill, which was the headquarters of Von Kluek. There is a wonderful view from there of the hill of Monthyon, upon which when the fortunes of the battle hung for a time in the balance Maunoury was preparing to fall back, and, indeed, of the whole field of action. If you look at the map you will see that it is almost at the centre of the quadrilateral that runs north and south from Betz to Meaux, and east and west from Nanteuil and Dammartin to the Ourcq.

This is one of those commanding places fated to play a part in war. In 1870, when the Prussians came through to Paris, it was also the headquarters of a General, with whom the present owner's father became acquainted through many months of an enforced association.

All about it the barbed wire still rusts in the air, the deep-dug trenches still remain unfilled; but the lower rooms

have been made inhabitable. Here in the solemn gloom, with scarcely a light or a fire in the house, two old ladies sit in silence, one on each side of the empty hearth. They have come back to the old home—battered as it is,—the only home they know. We are taken into the billiard-room upstairs. Its walls have been blown in by shells, the table is a wreck. "When we came back," says the owner, "it was full of our dead. The walls and the floors were stained with blood. There had been fierce bayonet fighting inside our house. Outside, the Germans had made a great pile and burnt their wounded alive. How do I know? Because some of them still moved when I came back.

"They left in a hurry, and the grass in the inner court was strewn with the fragments of a dinner that was uneaten—fowls and bread and bottles of wine. . . . Here is an inscription they left behind on my table: 'Why did you not stay to welcome us, dear sir? We could have enjoyed a pleasant game of billiards together. Excuse the damage we have done to your house. But war is war.' The cynical insolence of these people is beyond expression."

We took the road once more, following the quiet roads,—the searchlight, flinging its arc before us along the avenues, lighting the fluttering pennants over the numberless graves of the dead.

"The Sixth Army," said General Maunoury in the famous proclamation issued to the troops under his command on the 10th of September 1914, "has sustained during five entire days, without respite or rest, the burden of battle against an enemy strong in his numbers and exalted with the sense of victories. The fight has been a hard one: our losses from the enemy's fire, our exhaustion from want of sleep and often from the want of food, have surpassed all that the imagination could have conceived. You have borne with these, with a valour, a firmness, and a tenacity that words cannot express. *Comrades!* your General-in-Chief asked of you in the name of your country to do more than your duty. You have responded to his call. You have achieved the impossible, and victory has crowned your standards."

Upon this old battlefield, crowded with the memories of these days, these words ring true.

THE MARNE.

Eight o'clock of an October morning, Paris lies behind us, and the long *pavé* runs on before us through avenues of golden poplars on its way to Meaux. Here in this old town, with its ancient houses

standing in the midst of the waters of the river, its market-place busy once more with the life of its people, we touch the limits of the German flood, and the pivot of the great Battle of the Marne.

I was at the other end of the world in those days when the news first came through that the long and bitter retreat from Mons had at last been stayed, that the tide of battle was turning, and the invader being driven back upon his tracks. The memory of those days is inscribed in indelible letters upon the tablets of one's mind. . . . If the marching soldier bore the brunt of them in his person, the mental anguish was not less ours.

For we were afar off: we understood, but we could not help. And to-day I am to look upon the very scene of these events.

I have with me a little narrative paper written by the Curé of Germigny l'Éveque, a village in this diocese, describing his own impressions of that fateful time. He will allow me to borrow from him the mirror in which he reflects the passing of the British army.

"It was on the night of Wednesday, the 2nd of September," says he, "that the British army in full retreat passed through our city of Meaux. Never shall I forget that interminable and melancholy procession. A doleful silence brooded over the city, broken only by the measured tread of the soldiers. On the morning of Thursday, the 3rd of September, the air resounded to the noise of formidable explosions. The bridges and boats were being blown up. A man came running up, his voice choked with emotion: 'Monsieur le Maire,' he said, 'the English

say that they must blow up the Market Bridge.'

"M. Lugol rushed off at once to the Bridge, and found there General Haig, who had passed the night with his Staff at the house of M. de la Villeboisnet. He begged of him not to destroy the Market Bridge, but rather that of Cornillon, *as in 1814 and in 1870*. He pointed out the danger to the Mills, which are the beauty and the wealth of Meaux, and the hardship to the people of cutting the city in two. But the General, after consulting his map and his Engineer officers, replied that it was impossible, and that the Bridge would be blown up immediately the last of his soldiers had passed across it.

"All the roads leading to it were now barred by the English; and when I arrived at the Rue du Grand Cerf, a group of working men in their shirt sleeves clustered about me and began to talk. M. Gustave Huin, a bank clerk, alone wore a coat.

"An English officer looking at them said, 'Only the poor have remained.'

"'We are,' he continued, 'great marchers, trained to physical pursuits; but the Germans march even faster than we do. For the first five days they have pressed us relentlessly, without a pause even for sleep. They have covered as much as sixty kilometres a day. It is a desperate struggle of endurance, of marching power, in which we are involved.'

"But in the end," adds the good Curé, "it was the English, you see, who prevailed.

The Germans were unable either to destroy or to disorganise them; and when the Allies, on the 5th of September, with a marvellous recovery, regained the offensive on the Marne, the English were ready, and they played in the great battle a most brilliant part."

On the 7th of September Meaux was in the midst of the battle. The British guns pursued the enemy, his retreating artillery flung their shells into the town; but by six o'clock in the evening of that day Meaux was freed from the horrors of War.

As we follow the line of the river and its tributary the Petit Morin, it is sacred ground upon which we tread; for many a British soldier lies dead here in the fields. At Montmirail we stand for a moment under the grey column with its eagle, which the people of France have erected here in memory of the battles of Napoleon a hundred years ago. Along this road the German right wing, under Von Kluck, marched in those urgent days which preceded the Battle of the Marne; and as their columns swung past they looked upon this memorial to a great soldier, and left it untouched. In the little inn of the town, as the people who keep it will tell you, Von Kluck sat at lunch on the 4th of September, and upon the countryside the blood of the contending armies was poured out in those desperate hours when the world's history was on the turn.

Sezanne upon our right was

not occupied by the invaders; but it was here that the divisions of General Foch attacked the Prussian Guards and slew them amidst the *Marches of St Gond*. Thousands of them lie there to this day. The *Château of Mondement*, which lifts its proud front high above these level spaces, was in the very centre of the storm. After a tremendous bombardment which lasted two days and two nights, it was carried by the enemy, but retaken by the French after three furious assaults. For some anxious hours the great Battle of the Marne, working though it was with a superb symmetry of design, hung at this point in the balance; but Foch is a man made for Victory. At the most critical moment he transferred the whole of his 42nd Division from his left to his right wing, and fell upon the German flank which had driven a wedge into his line as far southwards as *Fère Champenoise*. Mondement was finally taken, and the armies of Von Bülow and Von Hausen were driven for ever across the Marne.

Behind these great events, whose memory is still so recent, there broods upon these fields, in such names as Montmirail, Vauchamp, Champaubert, the mighty genius of Napoleon. How often have we said in the course of this war: "If Napoleon had been alive!"

We put the map of France on the grass upon the wayside, and in the soft autumnal haze, where the barbed wire still rusts in the fields, and the

trenches of those days are still visible, try to reconstruct the scene. But it is already two years since the great battle was fought; its scars are hidden in the beauties of the landscape, the people are moving along the roads as of old, and it is hard to believe that the world was in conflict here. The beneficent hand of Nature is wiping away the tears. But we who are of this generation can never forget those urgent hours when the French, and the English under Sir John French, turned in their stride and flung the Boche from them; when Joffre, carrying the fate of Europe on his back, issued his famous order to his people to advance or to die where they stood; when Paris, upon the edge of woe, sighed her relief.

Leaving the wide highway to pursue its unbending course to Châlons on the Marne, we turn towards Rheims, and stay for a moment at the Château of Montmort. This superb old place, haughty with its lions at the gate, its moat and ancient keep, its winding stairway within the Castle, so made that a man can ride up to the very Hall, was the headquarters of the German Commander, and his name is still written over the door of the apartment reserved for his use—

HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL VON BÜLOW.

"He occupied my little daughter-in-law's room," says Madame, "and, as you see, it is a beautiful chamber; but she will not sleep in it again.

"Yes, that door was broken open by our uninvited guests;

we shall leave it as it is. It was where we kept our silver, and I need not add that they stole it, and carried it all away with them.

"No, they did not do what you would call any wilful damage. Our furniture, as you see, our pictures and carpets, were left intact. Their attention was confined to such little things of value as could be easily carried away—our miniatures, for instance;" and with this she opened the door of a little boudoir, in which, in a glass cabinet, the miniatures lay with bits of china and other *bibels* of the kind you will find in old houses, endeared to their owners by family memories and ties of sentiment.

The door of the cabinet is still locked, as it was when the Hun entered, but the glass in front of the shelf upon which the miniatures lay lies shattered into a hundred bits, as by the blow of a sword. Through the gaping hole his thieving hand removed the objects of his desire.

The lower shelves with their china remain untouched. Upon the white door of the room there is written in pencil the designation of the person to whom the room was assigned.

It is a damning piece of evidence, which it is open to His Excellency to rebut; and meanwhile we shall take leave to call it a calculated and brutal theft.

"No," says Madame, as she speaks of these things with a quiet and gentle restraint that is in singular contrast with the evidence, "unfortunately I was not here when they came. I

had hurried off to Albert to bring my grandchildren into safety at Paris. We had not expected them so soon. But had I known, I should have met them here upon my doorstep, as my father did in 1870.

"You see," she adds, with a smile that is half-proud, half-wistful, "we are accustomed to such incidents; our homesteads upon a highway of invasion."

We pass out of the Château into its beautiful grounds, in which Von Bülow, with the swank of the German Com-

mander, placed his escort of guns, and from the altitude of its inner courts looked down upon the great avenues that reach away from it, east and west, and south and north, like envoys to the four corners of France.

It is a place stamped with dignity, old with memories, bathed at this season in the gold of autumn, steeped in refinement and peace.

Von Bülow, Von Kluck, Von Hun, what have they in common with places such as this?

RHEIMS.

We are now upon the road to Rheims, and the car carries us with its swift untiring beat along one of those arrow-like avenues which take off from the Castle, past fields in which the women and the children toil, through burnished woodlands, and upon roads where the French cavalry ride, and the long supply-waggons of the Army roll slowly and doggedly on their way to the battle line. It is one of the strange facts of the War that for two years Rheims has been completely cut off from railway communication with the rest of France. All her approaches, except by road, are in the hands of the enemy.

We come to Epernay, with its tall spire and cluster of houses in the hollow amidst the bare hills of Champagne, and the serried vines paint the landscape with the colour of the wine. The soft October sunlight, pouring through the high clouds, veils the famous town in its luminous haze.

We cross the Marne, and running through the forests and uplands that rise beyond it—the grey mass of the Cathedral rising proudly before us as if Death had not taken it by the hand—we descend to the chosen of kings, the ancient city of Rheims.

The car draws up in the Place du Parvis, where Jean of Arc rides with her knightly and youthful grace in the forefront of the great Cathedral, untouched by the troubles of the time.

A sudden impression, as of something blistered and shrunk and old before its time, assails one's eyes. It is like coming to look upon one whose face we last saw in the pride of beauty, now worn and broken with disease. It is a dreadful thing to have to do.

"It gives one," says a French officer beside me, "it gives one a heartache to look at it."

Its rich and splendid portals are hidden behind sandbags

that time and weather have turned to mildewed black; its great rose-windows, that were once the pride of the world, gape in their empty sockets like the eyes of the blind; the statues and columns on its front are shattered and twisted as if in a convulsion of pain; the knees of its Christ over the northern portal are broken, His face is torn away; its saints, apostles, and kings; its soaring towers, its vaulted roof; its centuries of toil, the willing labour of men to whom their work was like a prayer,—all these, and more than these, are involved in the tragedy of destruction. A nail has been driven here into the very heart of France.

Within, as one enters, it is as though the soul had fled from the body. This shrine of France lies empty of its mystery. The dim glory of its interior is changed to the light of common day. Its "*Rose au cœur vermeil*," trembling with jewelled lights, is a ruin; its altars are unseated, its pictures and its damasks are taken away. Its choir is a pitfall of holes, and the dark stains of fire besmirch the creamy pillars, at whose base in their carven stalls the canons and the choristers chanted the litanies of heaven.

The great church is dead, and here, where the kings of France for fourteen hundred years came to be crowned, pigeons are now the only occupants, and the floor of

the Cathedral is littered with their dung.

It is said by one who was present and overheard him speak, that General Von Bülow, when his army took possession of Rheims, entered the Cathedral, and marching up the aisle with a stiff military gait, stood upon the High Altar, with his face towards the Choir, and looking down upon the assembled people, the canons at prayer, observed them in silence for some moments; then with an angry emphasis said (I give the words in French as I heard them)—

"C'est une erreur effroyable."

Whether he spoke of the destruction of the city—for it had already begun—or of the heresy of the Catholic Faith, is uncertain.

It is open to His Excellency to enlighten us.

Whether this Shrine of France will ever—or can ever—be restored is yet uncertain. The structure of the building has been seriously shaken, and a great hole recently made by a shell in the roof has so damaged the vaulting that the whole of it may have to be renewed, if the task be not impossible. Moreover, the prospect of further damage exists.¹

"It seems most likely that we shall end by restoring it," is the belief of those who are charged with the care of it; and the Church would wish to revive as far as might be this ancient symbol of the Divine Faith; but, on the other

¹ Since these words were written, Rheims has been savagely bombarded once more in revenge for the fall of Douaumont and Vaux.

hand, there are those who passionately hold the conviction that it should remain untouched, as a monument to the travail of France and the crimes of her invaders.

From the Cathedral we pass on through street after street ruined by the bombardment—the losses caused to the people are estimated at twenty million pounds,—past the Archbishop's Palace, which has ceased to exist; past piles of twisted iron and heaps of stone; past broken shops and houses and inns, till we are led to pause at the hospital, the ancient Hôtel Dieu, upon which, as upon the Cathedral, the fury of the German guns was visited. Upon its walls there still hang, though in a shattered state, the marble tablets upon which the names of benefactors to this old foundation were inscribed. They are a record of 1450 years, and for nearly a thousand of these the stream of constructive charity has flowed on in its beneficent course with scarcely an intermission. It has been left to the destructiveness of the present age to undo the goodness and the piety of those bygone generations of men.

In the East one is confronted at every turn with the message of the transitoriness of things,—with the shadows of cities that were once great, with the forgotten graves of Emperors and Kings who were the elect of their time,—and one is shaken by the evidence they bear to the vicissitudes and failures of civilisation. If this war is to be but the prelude to other and greater wars to come, as

so many seem to believe is certain, as some half hope in their hearts, it will not be necessary to go eastwards for such commentaries.

It was on the 3rd of September 1914 that the Huns entered the city of Rheims. On the 4th, without excuse or justification—for it had surrendered and was actually in the possession of their people—a battery of Artillery of the Guard (whose fate it was a few days later to perish in the marshes of St Gond) opened fire on the densely inhabited city, and in the brief space of forty-five minutes poured 200 shells into it, damaging its churches and killing outright sixty of its citizens who were walking in the streets.

"A mistake," said the officers present, "such as frequently occurs in war; let us proceed with our requisition." Nothing is more evident in these narratives of eye-witnesses than the thinness of the veneer of German manners.

"You have such a beautiful Cathedral," says the Commissary-General Zimmer, turning his crocodile eyes upon this Shrine of France, as though he would apprehend its meaning; and then flies into a rage at the delay in producing his 100,000 kilogrammes of bread, his oats and vegetables, and the million francs of his requisition.

"You have not had time! Faugh! that is what you people always say. In France everything ends in talk. You are a parcel of idlers and talk-

ers. But you will pay for this, I tell you; you will pay, *pay*. The Emperor has said that he will drive you to the Pyrenees. You will see . . ."

"No men? Then why the devil don't you make your women work?"

One can see and hear this Vulgarian raging.

Two German officers, a von Arnim and a von Kummer, having gone astray, a staff officer from General von Bülow comes in a fury to the unfortunate Mayor of Rheims.

"If you do not produce them within an hour your city will be blown to pieces, and you and ten others will be shot. The lives of a hundred thousand of your people are of less consequence than the lives of these two, the friends of the Emperor." Talk of megalomania!

So infuriated was this person that the words with difficulty issued from his mouth, and at times he became quite inarticulate.

And this was no common man, but a gentleman of the Staff.

When the facts are humbly explained to him, he calms down and disposes of the incident with a wave of his hand.

"If what you say be true, we may consider the matter as closed."

On the 4th of September a large body of Saxon troops marched through the city, with their usual parade, singing the "*Wacht am Rhein*." The square before the Cathedral was crowded with men and horses, and laid with straw for the men to bivouac on.

On the 5th of September the Allied armies began their offensive. On the 7th the German wounded began to pour through the city. The sound of guns came steadily nearer, till on the 12th it enveloped the city. On the 13th the French infantry entered Rheims. On the 14th the Huns began their bombardment; on the 18th they resolved to avenge their defeat and to strike terror into the people of France by an act of special "frightfulness." The Cathedral, the crowning place of so many kings, the offspring of two centuries of toil, the very flower of Gothic Art, with its 2800 statues of varied and exquisite beauty, the mirror of their age, its rose-windows and its painted glass, softened to such harmonies as only time can bring, was to be destroyed.

"The blood of our soldiers is of more consequence than all the monuments of France," was the arrogant boast of the German General. Yet even the blood of his wounded, left to the mercy of the French, did not suffice to stay the fury of his hand. On the 17th of September the German wounded had been carried into the Cathedral. The Red Cross floated from its spire. The Prince Augustus-William, a son of the Emperor, had himself desired that an ambulance should be established there during his occupation of the city.

On the 19th, the noble and beautiful fabric, the Westminster Abbey of France, was in flames.

"I climbed," says one who kept a faithful record of these events from day to day, almost

from hour to hour—"I climbed up into the garret of my house, from the cellars in which we had taken refuge, and I saw the whole of the great edifice enveloped in smoke. This was the prelude to the worst misfortune that could have overtaken us.

"The scaffolding of the north tower rapidly took fire, and its beams in falling made an immense brazier in the courts of the Cathedral.

"Higher up the flames reached the lead of the high-pitched roof, at the northern angle of the nave, and mounted up on the other side to the top of the *Galerie du Gloria*, of which a portion was destroyed.

"They licked a part of the scene of David and Goliath, damaging at the same time the sculptures and mutilating the statues of the Saints of the Diocese along the whole length of the eastern portal. The great roof was next involved, the molten lead running in streams and zigzags with extraordinary rapidity along the top. The superb oak rafters of the nave burnt in their turn. At about four o'clock the scene I gazed upon from our house-top was a spectacle of horror, reviving memories of the terrible fire of 1481. The roof of the transept was next reached, and the base of the central steeple glowed with the fire of the beams. At its summit we could see the clock, the peal of bells, and even the bell that tolled the hours; and then all suddenly fell and vanished, crumbling upon the vault in a mass of glowing timbers, twisted iron, and molten lead. We could see

the Archer, recently renewed in mahogany, at the summit of the south transept, take fire, and slowly consume himself in his leaden bennet.

"The apse rapidly followed suit; the Spire of the Angel trembled on its base, divested of the leaden figures that made about it so picturesque a crown, and crumbled away on the side of the Archbishop's palace. The slate roofs of the towers flanking the transept were at the same time destroyed. Flames and clouds of white smoke began to issue from the towers of the great portal, and we wondered what would be the fate of the bells. In the north tower, which was like a chimney on fire, the eight bells of the famous chime des Cauchois—three of them suspended and five upon the ground—were attacked by the flames. The south tower was untouched by the conflagration, and its two big bells stood intact under the roof.

"While the fire thus devoured the high-pitched roof of the Cathedral, its interior was also alight, the flames being fed by the straw which had been laid upon the floor, the chairs heaped up in the choir, and by the wooden tambours or vestibules over the great door.

"Out of this hell there emerged the German wounded, whom the crowd, maddened with rage, would have done for, had they not all, with scarcely an exception, been saved by the clergy of the Cathedral and a few brave citizens, at considerable risk to their own lives."

The Palace of the Archbishop, a relic of the fifteenth century, with its priceless contents, the accumulation of centuries, was next destroyed. Its tapestries, its books, its portraits, its archives, its royal apartments and banqueting hall, the Salle des Rois, in which so many kings of France had lodged upon the eve of their coronation; its neighbouring museums, the Library of the Academy of Rheims, memorials of the historic life of the city,—these were the silent victims of the German rage.

The unhappy citizens were reduced to a subterranean life in their cellars, and exposed to imminent destruction in the streets.

Thousands of them fled from this city of woe, leaving behind them for ever their homes and possessions and all that had made for joy and the happiness of generations of their ancestors.

The record of these events is a terrible one, burnt into the heart of France; but it is only the surface of it that you see in the wasted city. The inner history of those who have suffered can never in its fulness be told; the evil that has been done can never be repaired.

"Those," in the words of Thomas Hardy, "who have studied in close detail the

architecture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, are aware that to restore the Cathedral in its entirety is impossible.

"Much of what is gone from this fine structure is gone for ever.

"The magnificent stained glass of the Cathedral—how is that to be renewed? Then the sculpture, and the mouldings, and other details.

"Moreover, their antique history was a part of them, and how can that history be imparted to a renewal?"

Heine, who well understood the German spirit, foresaw that this evil would come. The day would come, he said, when the old gods of the Germans would rise from their tombs, and Thor, with his hammer in hand, would utterly destroy these Gothic cathedrals.

The dread prophecy has come to pass with the relentless march of a Greek tragedy, the conscious act of the German people. "Our armies," they said on the 5th of September 1914, "have already passed the second line of defence of the French forts, with the exception of Rheims, whose royal splendour, reaching back to the times of the White Lilies, will not fail to be ground into the dust, under the blows of our 16-inch guns."

A QUIET DAY IN THE ARGONNE.

If you look at the map of Eastern France you will see how the forest of Argonne, with its crumpled hills, lies astride of the great road that leads from Verdun to Châlons,

and you will understand at once why the Hun, eager to capture Verdun and drive another wound into the side of France, fought so hard for a foothold in this difficult

country. It was a desperate business this fighting in the Argonne mud and the Argonne valleys and woods, with mine and counter-mine, with the bayonet and the hand-grenade; a bitter, relentless, obstinate struggle of man against man, trench against trench, of assaults and counter-attacks; of bloody and terrible contests, of which only the distant sound, like the murmur of a city afar off, has reached the ears of our people. But the French know what the Argonne fighting has been, and they know that they have won, as at Verdun, by dint of their pluck and tenacity,—the bull-dog courage that has hitherto been the special characteristic of the island soldier.

That is why the French are proud of the Argonne. And those of us who love this gallant people, who have known them of old as the embodiment of all knightly and chivalrous qualities, from the days of St Louis to this present hour, rejoice with them in this fresh exhibition of the undying qualities of the race. Verdun and the Argonne, these are in a special sense a monument to the new France.

It was not my fortune to see Verdun. The fierce blow at the Hun, which was to drive him with an unmistakable significance from Douaumont and Vaux, was on the eve of its accomplishment, and the curtain was down between Verdun and the Argonne. But we got some little way on the road.

From Châlons we made straight for St Menehould,

only stopping at l'Epine, where a company of French infantry were drawn up in the place before the church—a stout hard-bitten lot of men under the command of a young officer of fine proportions, with the air of one who would lead them anywhere. The war has had rather a curious effect in this way; it has withdrawn, as it were, the mask under which the Napoleonic soldier has hidden himself for a hundred years.

When you see these men in their blue uniforms marching out to fight, these remarkable-looking men who lead them, you understand in a flash what is meant by the military tradition of France. The palimpsest runs clear.

The church beside this little company of men was a beautiful thing in stone, with its sculptures without and its solemn peace within; and I could not resist looking in at the ceremonial that was afoot within its walls, the lights gleaming like stars amidst its gloom, the robed priest before the altar, the kneeling women at prayer. For these also are an inextinguishable part of France.

At St Menehould we entered the forest-clad hills of the Argonne, and the road carried us through the beauties of the autumn woods to the village of Les Islettes, scarred by shell fire and maimed by the proximity of war. Had we gone on to Verdun we should in a few moments have been at Clermont, twelve miles in a line from the famous fortress; and from Clermont, had

we gone north, we should have travelled upon *the road to Varennes*.

But we had another destination to-day. Crossing the miniature valley of the Blésme, which bisects the Argonne from north to south, we ascended the farther ridge and drove the car along the road that runs through the forest to the French entrenchments.

Upon either side of us the trees rose like a wall, sombre where the firs stood in sentinel line, golden where the autumn colours marked the passing of the year. Under our wheels the mud was churned into a cream—the mud of the Argonne.

We had come into a land of the forest-dwellers. Deep in the glades were the huts of the French infantry. In a clearing by the roadside spread the graves of those who have died here in the Argonne. Even in these quiet days this sacred spot is the daily target of the German shells.

It stands at a cross-roads where the traffic meets, and the dead you see have to be buried. It is their comrades assembled for the last tribute that the shells seek out at these solemn moments.

A little farther through the forest and we are close up against the Four de Paris and the enemy's lines. And here, seen from within, is the little world in which the soldier of the Argonne has his being.

In these woods there are the huts in which he must live till the war is over, or the line of battle has advanced across the Rhine.

The ground in which they are imbedded is a puddle, and a glimpse into their interiors shows a long double line of beds and cubicles lost in the gloom of the farther distance, with rifles and accoutrements and the personal belongings of each soldier hanging from the walls and wooden posts.

Each bed is raised above the ground, its framework of wire spread tightly across from post to post, and on it a layer of sacking and blankets.

In this place a man can be warm and dry and sociable, but it is a hard life, redeemed only by the love of country, the pride of beauty, the contrast with harder things—sickness and wounds and death—redeemed also for many by the ties of comradeship and fellowship in danger; for others, the solitary, made difficult by the fortuitous character of this very association. We talk of our public schools, but there is no public school like the barrack for its discipline and its lesson of human equality. A man who rises out of these dim surroundings into the light of acceptance by his fellows, as one who is better than themselves, is surely a man.

The French soldier has more to put up with than our own. His pay is microscopic; his comforts are reduced to the minimum necessary for bodily efficiency; his amusements, if any, are provided by himself. In places like this, where he must pass a year or more of his life, there is no Y.M.C.A. to cater for his larger needs; no place of common meeting where

books and papers can be read or letters written; concerts and similar entertainments do not appear to be organised. A frugal hardness is the predominant note of the French arrangements.

On the other hand, the habit of games is not ingrained in the Poilus; the smack of the football is seldom heard behind the front of battle. The more active indulge themselves in gymnastics, and these are encouraged from a military point of view. I saw groups of men busy in this way in the Argonne. But gymnastics are not games. They do not help a man to forget himself in the same way. Is there any solvent for care like a twelve-minute *chukker* on the grass—the rush after an elusive ball?

But there is some joy for François in the Co-opératifs, where the men assemble in hundreds, making shift in the mud and the wet of the yard, till their turn comes to enter the little shop and make their purchases. The storekeeper is a brisk, capable man trained to the job,—a Paris chemist or a grocer from some provincial town,—and as each soldier enters he reads from a slip of paper, on which he has made a list of the things he wants for himself and comrades—12 pats of Norman butter, 6 packets of biscuits, 6 tins of sardines, 200 cigarettes, 2 bottles of good wine. There is evidently to be a small party in the barrack, and the purchaser goes off with his goods in a capacious knapsack, and a quiet look of contentment on his face.

A little extra food, a smoke, a gulp of wine—that is what it all comes to, and the Poilu plugs along, hardy, enduring, dutiful. He will be glad when the war is over, and he can go back to his mother or his wife, to little Jean and Marie, to the ancestral acre or the family shop; but meanwhile, for rich or poor, ignorant or cultivated, nobleman or peasant, priest or layman, there is the one pre-eminent call—his country, his beautiful France, must be saved, the brute that has fastened on her driven from her soil. Whisper in his ear the word “La Patrie,” and he is stirred to the roots of his being. There is no love greater than this.

As to Glory and Honour and Empire, these are of a music to which his soul has been attuned through centuries of a splendid history; but they can wait. The first thing is to kill the Boche and drive him from the sacred soil; and the knowledge that he is doing this is the consolation of the French soldier. In the first year of the War he used to ask when the War would end; he does not ask that question now. The granite is exposed. He knows the answer.

There are few places on the long French line where the destruction wrought by artillery fire is exhibited in a more contrasting form than here. One travels here for mile after mile through the forest, green in the spring-time, golden at this season of autumn, its soil carpeted with the brown tapestry of the fallen leaves, one's vision limited by the thronging trees. Here is a woodland as

nature made it, rejoicing in its little valleys, its secret fountains and running streams; and *there*, as though it had been ravaged by a fire and swept by disease, upon the very edge of these secluded beauties, is the Desert of War.

A few trees stand out of it, gaunt and distorted, like criminals who have paid the price of their sins. The limbs and the skulls of dead men bleach in its precincts. There is nothing else. You must not look at it, except through a slit in a peep-hole, lest the enemy, suspecting your presence, should put a bullet through your enterprising head; and you must not think about it too much, lest its beastliness should obscure the ideals for which it is worth man's while to die. And yet you must look at it well, and dwell upon every circumstance of horror and pain connected with it, lest you should ever be tempted by the illusion that war is a glorious and splendid thing.

At an earlier period of the war the fighting on the Argonne was of the most bitter and obstinate description. To know how bitter and obstinate it was you must have been there or have spoken to those who went through it; but failing these, you can learn something of the story from such a book, for example, as Jean L  ry's '*Battle in the Forest*.' Mine and counter-mine, attack and counter-attack; artillery preparation; close trench-fighting; men at handgrips; knife and bayonet, whole companies and battalions wiped out; the

fierce will to win through, met by a fiercer refusal to make way; and in the end the triumph of the stronger will—the Huns' growing acceptance of failure.

The fight still goes on; the pioneers are busy on both sides making their tunnels—we went down into these—and exploding their mines. From trench to trench where they meet on the brow of the hill, men still shoot and slay each other at sight; it is still unwise to talk above a whisper as you move along the hidden ways within a few feet of the enemy; the air still resounds to the violent crash of the howitzer, the splitting roar of the 75; scarcely a day passes that some one is not killed or maimed. But in effect the battle of the Argonne is over, and the Hun has lost his tide.

Behind the trenches there is the post of the officer in command.

The hills run down here on both sides, leaving a little valley between them; and in this valley there moves the life of the line in reserve. The dug-outs in which the officers and men live are caves that have been excavated in the valley slopes. Here is the Colonel's cave, with a little inscription beside it that speaks of the affection of his men. They have made it as comfortable for him as they can. There is a fireplace in it, and a table and a bed, and the smallest of verandahs under the logs of the projecting roof in which you may suppose that he can sit on a quiet day.

Upon the walls there are the wonderful maps which make all things plain, and sketches done by skilled hands. There is a telephone on the table.

Near by there is a cemented chamber, with an immensely solid roof, into which the commander and his staff can retire should the enemy's artillery become too violent. It is seldom used now. Beside this, again, there is the hospital, with its kitchen at the mouth of the cave, and its wounded men within, upon bunks fixed like racks against the wall. There is only a dim light here, and the men lie very still. Those who can be moved are sent very rapidly to a hospital at the base. "It is damp in here," says the Surgeon, "but we cannot help that. We do what we can to keep the place warm and dry."

Outside the blue infantry move amidst the gilded trees, the smoke of their fires rising slowly into the clearing of the sky. From time to time the shells burst in the road beyond, and the shrapnel bullets scatter with a noise like hail through the autumn leaves.

One or two fall at our feet. Such is a quiet day in the Argonne.

When I think of it all the pleasantest memory is of the men one meets in such places. There is no people more agreeable than the French, either as hosts or guests. They understand the pleasantness of intercourse, and to their wonted courtesy there is added these days a frankness and grave simplicity that appeal more especially to ourselves.

The War has drawn us together in more than words.

At C—— no visitor is allowed to pass without an invitation to the General's Mess. Many must carry with them the memory of that cheery and distinguished company. Upon the long table there reposes a delicious centrepiece in plaster, made by an artist in the ranks, of two Cupids embracing each other, one with the French helmet on his head, the other wearing the cock's plumes of the Bersaglieri.

This was a little tribute to General Cadorna when he came here.

"Two days ago," said the General, "we had Lord French here."

General Joffre, the President of the French Republic, his Royal Highness of Connaught, brother of *le feu Roi Edouard*, and how many more have been here.

Upon the mantelpiece there is one of those winged bombs, or aerial torpedoes, they fire into the trenches, made into a lamp of the most attractive design.

The General himself is the typical soldier of the 'seventies, with his French imperial and social grace. Forty years of service have not dimmed the charm of his manner: forty years before him his father was also a General of France.

General Gouraud, whose guest I was to have been, is absent, called away by the news of his brother's death at the Front. You have seen that wonderful portrait of him with the blue eyes in

'L'Illustration'? It will do you good to look at it, and if you compare it with the coarse and brutal features of a Hindenburg or a Bülow you must understand why the world is on the side of France against the Hun.

The War is summed up in these faces.

"*Quel beau regard!*" says one of this General, "*plein de limpidité et de mâle énergie. Quelle belle tête de soldat! Je songe, en le quittant, à ce qu'on disait d'un des grands généraux de Napoléon: les gens devenaient braves rien qu'en les regardant.*"

In the Argonne mud, as we tramped along to the splutter and crash of the shrapnel overhead, of which he took not the faintest notice, I had the fellowship of a man who looked like a Viking with his red beard and noble stature. His name is well known in Paris as an art critic, and it was in the midst of these unpromising surroundings that he gave me the benefit of his views on the War, and its effect upon literature and art.

"In the days of our children," he said, "the War will bear fruit."

And there was another, an officer whose meditations on the beautiful old themes of Duty, and Honour, and Love of Country, inspired by the life of the trenches, have won favour as part of the current literature of the War, whose company I enjoyed upon the same occasion. He was going

on five days' leave to Paris, and I had the pleasure of meeting him there with his wife, a vivid and charming Frenchwoman, the helpmeet of her husband, and the partner of his fortunes. She thoroughly understood his point of view and his work, and between them they are raising up for the next generation no less than five sons. His book is dedicated to these children, in the good hope that when they grow up they may prove themselves "men of honour, strong, free, and brave."

Thus it is in the future that these men live. To-day there is for them the trench, with its mud and its physical misery; the hospital where they lie wounded; the narrow, maybe the nameless, grave: the morrow is for their children, the new generation that will carry on the proud and stately tradition of France.

From the Argonne ridge, as we came away, we could see the smiling plain where Clermont lies in ruins, and Verdun and the Meuse lay beyond; but these were hidden from our eyes. At Valmy on its ridge we stayed to look at the column of Victory, where the heart of Kellermann lies buried. It marks the limit of the Teutonic hordes as it did in the days of Attila and of the armies of the Revolution; we could hear from it, in the late evening as we went upon our way, the sullen thunder of their guns.

ODYSSEUS.

(To be continued.)

ON TOUR WITH AN INDIAN PROCONSUL.

(A RECORD—WITH SOME IDLE REFLECTIONS.)

THE Governor or Chief Commissioner of an Indian Province spends half his official life at his own particular headquarters, and the remainder of the year "in camp," touring his Province. During such tours he investigates the grievances of his people upon the spot, inspects new ventures in engineering, agriculture, or social reform, and keeps himself generally *au fait* with all enterprise and energy that affects the wellbeing of the land. On such occasions he is accompanied by those Civil Officers who are immediately connected with his administrative work, and also by his personal staff—the number and duties of these several officials being governed by the relative size and importance of the Province in question.

Before describing the experiences which I have been recently privileged to share, I must explain that our actual party consisted of the Proconsul of our Province, the Chief Secretary of the Province, and the Proconsul's Personal Assistant—the last designation officially disguising my own identity. In addition, we were accompanied by our clerical staff, which included both Europeans and Indians, and also by a host of scarlet-clad native retainers, who are, as a general rule, more ornamental than useful.

The tour constituted my first experience of "Civil" work in India,—for I am not a *heaven-born*, but an invalided soldier,—and so my impressions, such as they are, should at least be free from prejudice, since they were formed with an entirely open mind and one quite uninfluenced by any preconceived ideas.

The horrors of six weeks' intermittent railway travel from pillar to post during the months of July and August in eastern India are somewhat mitigated in our own case by the fact that the Proconsul, the Chief Secretary, and myself are severally and separately provided with what would be called in England private saloon carriages. As we all control travelling offices when on tour, this privacy is in reality more a necessity in a hot climate than a luxury. We also possess a private kitchen upon the train, and this enables us to mess together more comfortably and less expensively than in the ordinary restaurant-car of commerce. Not that we always travel by train—far from it: the method of our progress depends entirely upon the nature of the country through which we pass, and sometimes we motor, often we use a steam-yacht, and occasionally we patronise the lordly elephant or the undig-

nified but useful twelve-hand and country-bred hill pony.

When we halt, our three several offices, be they established in dak bungalow, tent, or side-tracked railway car, flash into electric energy, while letters, cipher telegrams, "petitions," and statistical reports pass and repass between us, with endorsement, comment, or pertinent blue - pencilled notes, until, in the final operation of Time and Eternity, they are finally disposed of and mercifully consigned to *Limbo*, which is only another name for "the Files." It is not until you have been in India and associated with the Indian Civil Service that the obsession of "the Files" really grips you, and you dream at night of death among oceans of ink and sloughs of blotting-paper at the hands of an army corps of babus and chaprassis.

We motored down to-day from the cool of our headquarters in the hills to the infernal regions of the lower plains, and are now temporarily on board the Proconsul's steam-yacht, prior to catching a train this evening. We are anchored on the broad swell of the Brahmaputra river, surrounded by scenery that resembles the fairyland of a blue-and-white Chinese plate, all conical hills and feathery bordered streams.

Opposite the steamer, as I write, and in the river itself, two twinkling-eyed elephants are performing their evening ablutions, assisted therein by their fussing mahouts, who, perched upon their necks,

scrape their black and shiny backs with rough and knobby stones. It must feel like sitting upon a house-top and massaging the roof. At intervals the great beasts bob under the cool current, but never so deeply as completely to duck their dry-clad attendants: truly the elephant is a most sagacious animal. The sun sets and, refreshed and happy, they depart in a dusty haze *en route* for some Gargantuan supper.

The rapidly falling darkness now warns us that it is time to catch our train. The pale liquid blue of the river is suddenly changed to the steely tint that a naked sword flings back to a midsummer sky, while black, Venetian-like silhouettes — of island, ship, and shore—enframe the whole delicate colour-scheme. We reach the station, and, after swallowing our ration of quinine, proceed to dine under the dusty whirl of the electric punkahs; and presently the swaying train roars forward into the gloomy swelter of the sultry Indian night.

Warned by the Chief Secretary, who is an old hand at the game, I order my native servant to arrange mosquito curtains over my sleeping-berth, for we are about to pass through a hundred miles of unrelieved and marshy forest that bears a sinister reputation for malaria, on account of the myriads of mosquitoes that lurk around its tepid and stagnant pools.

The advice was well given, for presently out of the clattering darkness and through my six wide-open windows comes

swarm after swarm of noisome insect pests that are hatched from the rotting vegetation of this miasmatic zone. Dancing mosquitoes, persistent *dim dams*, fat, loathsome beetles, white, mouldy-looking moths, and other flying obscenities that my soul abhors, attack me with sanguinary persistence, until I plunge into my stifling bunk behind the muslin nets that form my protective armour against them. No chance of a last pipe—not for me a *wee doch-an-dorris*—my tobacco, soda-water, and tantalus-stand are all at the farther end of the saloon, and I dare not leave my curtained sanctuary to face those clinging horrors again!

Scarcely have I turned in, however, when the train comes to an airless standstill, and a pleasant voice outside my carriage says courteously: "You're the new P.A.,¹ aren't you? You might tell your boss that we've just got a wire warning us that the Ballikatcha Bridge is unsafe again. We've got to cross it at two in the morning."

Am I to warn my "boss" for the better preparation of his soul in death, I wonder; and, stumbling to my feet, I suggest weakly that if the bridge is really unsafe, it might be just as well to avoid the suicidal policy of attempting to cross it in the heavy mail-train.

However, the adventurous soul outside declares that it will be "jolly exoiting," and adds cheerily that this par-

ticular bridge is *always* "more or less dioky," owing to the jam-ups of timber against its arches that occur in flood-time. With this happy knowledge I fall asleep again, wondering where my next awakening will be.

My awakening is still this side Jordan, after all. A bad metaphor, by the way, for the river that the doubtful bridge spans, has been crossed in safety and left behind us during the night. The train is still rushing through an interminable and gloomy forest that, with the prolific lush of all tropical jungle, seeks to smother even the narrow railway track that cuts through its sullen solitude like an ant-road through a field of standing corn. There is something oppressive and even physically crushing in this silent menace of the vegetable world around us, that so clearly resents the intrusion of pigmy man into its deepest depths. Ten paces from the railway track, among all that giant elephant grass or clustering foliage, and you would be as lost as a blind beetle in a dense shrubbery.

As a matter of fact, this narrow passage through the jungle has to be cut clear thrice a year to prevent the railway line from being swallowed up altogether; and although I am informed that this was done but two months ago, the waving and tree-tall grasses outside are actually

¹ P. A. = Personal Assistant.

brushing against our windows and over the roof of our compartments, as we tear through them in the tawny sunlight.

We glide into a small and prosaic railway station about midday. Here the Proconsul is met by the local civil officials, and, his motor-car detrained from its truck, we proceed to the native township hard by that he has come to visit. We put up at the Circuit House, a crazy barn that seems especially constructed with a view to admitting every ray of blazing sunlight and excluding every breath of scanty air, and under its primitive punkahs we await the stream of Indian visitors who will presently call to pay their respects to the Proconsul. Most of them arrive in gala attire, bearing important-looking visiting-cards, which at least leave you in no doubt as to their owner's identity. "Mr Dass Dutta, Pleader (failed), M.A., living opposite the Medical Hall," is one example. "Mr Banyat Ghose, Late Criminal," is more obscure, until you learn that he is a retired clerk, formerly employed in some Criminal Court.

Our visitors may be subdivided—from a Personal Assistant's point of view—into two classes: namely, the courteous and the rude. For upon the P.A. devolves the delicate and thankless task of mustering the flock of callers in some anteroom before the interviews begin, and of arranging the order of the precedence in

which they are to be admitted. Further, he is responsible for whom he admits, and would become distinctly unpopular if, through inadvertence, ignorance, or error, he should introduce the local anarchist in mistake for the local pillar of the State. To resume: the courteous class of visitor is, for the most part, composed of the older generation, who still adhere to the customs of their forefathers, and who still wear their graceful Indian dress. The less courteous are the younger gentlemen, mostly of the legal profession, who affect patent-leather boots, talk pedantic English, and who know more about Cosmic Existence than God ever intended them to.

At each halt in our tour dozens of applications for such personal interviews with our Proconsul are sent to me, and in almost every case these are considerately granted, for a Proconsul has no hour in the day that he can call his own.

To any one accustomed to dealings with the laughter-loving Pathan, the dignified Sikh, or the courteous Rajput of the old military school, the educated product of "young India" is not at first sight a prepossessing person, if only on account of the fact that he is in a transition stage of evolution, having so often lost the qualities of the East that are charming without as yet having acquired those of the West that might compensate for their loss. This, however, is the penalty of his Cosmopolitan progress, and it is ungenerous

to over-emphasise such superficial shortcomings.¹

The Anglo-Indian Press may sneer at him, he may at times give a sober-minded British Administration just cause for anxiety, but the Young Indian, for all his faults and failings, is to his country what the *Intelligensia* are to Russia: that active leaven in a conservative community that is striving to stir an apathetic peasantry into political self-consciousness; and if at times his patriotism is frankly tainted by self-interest and personal ambition, is he unique among politicians in these his shortcomings?

The attitude of such progressive Indians is often misinterpreted in England and mistaken for sedition, but between the progressive and the extremist in India there is a great gulf fixed. The progressive aspires to Indian political autonomy within the British Empire, while the extremist is a sort of Oriental Sinn Feiner. In fact, there are legitimate and creditable political ambitions in India, as opposed to frank sedition; and the Indian Civil Service is the first to recognise, encourage, and guide such ambitions, because our avowed ideal as Englishmen is to train India to stand alone. A Bureaucracy, however, is apt to be over-cautious, even as a Nationalist agitator is always over-impetuous; and to curb the forces of impatient idealism

upon the one side while spurring the forces of unimaginative reaction on the other, is the delicate task of every successive Indian Viceroy. Delicate, indeed, is his task, for the field of Indian politics is full of pitfalls for the unwary, and complicated by hundreds of side-issues that are scarcely intelligible to the English mind.

At first sight it must always seem incomprehensible to the democracies of the West that Britain, herself the cradle of all democratic thought, has hitherto reserved for her sons the right to rule 300,000,000 men of an alien race, with or without their permission, upon lines that by no stretch of the imagination can be called democratic. The explanation, however, can be given them in a nutshell, and is in reality a rather curious paradox. British rule in India had first to be established—if it had to be established at all, and we are not here concerned with the ethics of Imperialism—upon lines that were both intelligible and acceptable to the people of the land, thus faithfully fulfilling the first unwritten principle of all democratic Government; but the lines that at the time were acceptable to the people themselves were essentially the reverse of democratic. All that India was then seeking was a strong rule and a just, that might put an

¹ All the more so in my own case, since I possess many valued friends among the very class which, as a whole, I now venture to criticise. My Indian friends' press, however, is not backward in criticising English shortcomings, so why should I be more diffident in handing the mirror back to them?

end to a state of bloody chaos. To have thrust the ballot-box, the stump-orator, and all the other paraphernalia of Western self-government upon a startled and unappreciative East, that cared for none of these things, would have been the act of a political pedant.

From those days onwards, however, our policy from start to finish has been one of liberal education and political tuition, by which means we have hoped to render India finally appreciative of Western political ideals and independent of English control, save only as India's continued presence within the Empire should necessitate some Imperial guidance.

The one and only enemy to this progressive and very rational policy has been the almost incredible conservatism of the people themselves, with whose religious systems, social habits, and general individual liberty it has been of course no part of a democratic Government to interfere unduly, even in the cause of Liberal progress.

At the present moment, with all our efforts to "hustle the East," we have made but little impression upon the citadel of the people's mind, and the present active political agitation on the part of "Young India," that calls for further opportunities for national self-expression, is, as we have already intimated, merely the cry of an exotic class—the Anglicised few—and in no way really represents the opinions of the masses, who have not the

slightest understanding of Western political thought.

In Calcutta there are dozens of indigenous newspapers which urge this, that, and the other, with point and fluency. Reading them, a globe-trotting M.P. might easily imagine that the Indian Press represented the Indian peoples. It is otherwise, however; and probably less than one per cent of India's three hundred millions ever opens a daily newspaper, and the few who do are all of the same clerklly vocation, and the majority of one race,—the Bengali. So when we hear statements made to the effect that the Russo-Japanese War "thrilled the spirit of India," or that the present Armageddon has "stirred India's soul into a new consciousness," we must remember that outside this Anglicised minority the real India is almost as cut off from outside thought as it was five hundred years ago, and still discusses few topics save taxation and income, religion and miracles, harvest and women.

The pressure of recent political events in India, which have come to pass as the outcome of the Dependency's share in an Imperial war, and because of the opportunism of the moment, cannot be ignored or underrated; but has the time yet come to hand over the destinies of our great Dependency to a small Anglicised, and therefore denationalised, class of clerklly intellectuals who, to be candid, as yet possess neither the con-

fidence nor the respect of their more virile, even if more primitive, fellow-countrymen? Western education—that former panacea for all Indian evils—has yet to justify its existence in India, and in this actual instance the education of the masses is not keeping pace with the political ambitions of the educated classes, nor can the Government do anything to remedy this state of affairs¹ unless assisted voluntarily by the people themselves, who have as yet shown no sign of ardent enthusiasm in that connection.

My Punjabi Mohamedan orderly, from the Frontier Cavalry, who was recently invalidated from France, has, as usual, something terse to say about the whole situation in Eastern India, which is of course a country as foreign to him as to myself.

“Why should I learn English?” asks Shah Sowar—*à propos* of the thousands of clerkly Indians here who speak it. “Thank God, my own tongue and my own country are good enough for me! Am I an ape or a parrot to copy foreign tricks? Are you English so wise, who made this war without an army, after mocking for years the sword and all who used it, that I who am of the line of Daud Shah should learn your wisdom?”

Nota bene that Shah Sowar is developing a habit of unpleasing sarcasm that must be sternly repressed before—as I

hope—we both recover and return to the wars together. His name, by the way, modestly translated, means “Princely Horseman”; his present ambition in life is to loot Bengal, and a “Young Indian” is to him what the medieval Jew was to the Muscovite, or what the red rag is to the bull!

There is a long low line of misty blue hills above the feathery jungle ahead, in which lies the home of a peculiar and aboriginal people called the Nagas. India is ever a land of contrasts, but to discover a race of utter savages more primitive even than those of Central Africa itself within a metaphorical stone’s-throw of babu-ridden Calcutta, is sufficiently startling even for Asia.

The Naga, as a general rule, wears no clothes that are visible; worships any spirit, malignant or otherwise, that his imagination can conjure up, and in his lighter moments is a devotee of the great and ancient order of “head-hunters”—those gentlemen who merely hunt heads as other connoisseurs hunt butterflies: namely, with no ulterior motive at all, but simply for the passionless love of the thing. Those within our own borders are now comparatively tame, but just across the frontier the old order still prevails, and, armed with primitive knives and arrows, the race continues to exterminate itself, to its own complete satisfaction.

In appearance they are

¹ The difficulty is primarily a financial one.

bronzed, handsome nudities, with the muscular symmetry of a slender Grecian statue, and the dignified poise of throat and head that mark the noble savage in general. They are often strikingly good-looking, and, excepting always their murderous propensities, already described, they are a race both attractive and genial. I have just met a party of them from the fastnesses of their native hills and forests. They were dressed in their best clothes—to wit: heavy silver necklaces of crude design, arrow quivers of painted wood, real scarlet poppies fastened in their ears, like ear-rings, and a few tastefully-chosen feathers in their hair. The last touch gave them an appearance vaguely reminiscent of the Redskin. They know no Hindustani at all, and are, in fact, as foreign to the races of India as I am myself. More foreign, in fact, for they belong to an eerie pre-Aryan stock that has now nearly disappeared from the planet. One of the party, however, knew some English, and at once asked for whisky, and when I supplied this form of nourishment they proceeded to drink about half a pint of raw spirit apiece, with no effect that was apparent, their own national beverages being, as I am told, far stronger than anything that Scotland can produce. Their spokesman's knowledge of English being extremely limited, I was unable to ascertain the exact purpose of their visit to the plains during the hot and rainy season, and they sub-

sequently departed as unobtrusively as they had come,—but not before they had thanked me most ceremoniously for the refreshment of which they had partaken in my bedroom. Was it fancy, I wonder, or *did* the youngest member of their party throw a rueful look at *my head* upon leaving? As a mere youth of sixteen, his own collection of such human trophies was, in all probability, but small as yet, and just as the boy collector of postage stamps or birds' eggs peers enviously into the shop windows at those specimens that he cannot afford to buy, so did that brown and naked young sylvan god stare mournfully at my bare and uncollared neck, so maddeningly secure upon my English shoulders. These Nagas have asked for no interview with the Proconsul, so presumably they are not interested in Indian politics!

Close to these Naga hills is another formerly turbulent little State called Manipur, the past history of which recalls that of a South American republic as regards the number and ferocity of its internal revolutions. It is now peaceably administered by a Manipuri Maharajah of the British Government's selection; but as late as 1891 a predecessor of our Proconsul, together with his Personal Assistant and the Political Agent, were lured unarmed into the palace of the then reigning monarch and beheaded on the spot. *Absit omen!* They were on tour, too! How-

ever, we are not bound for their mountains, but are to continue our progress through the tea districts in the plains.

We have recently been entertained at a tea-planter's tiffin, which was an experience that I had always coveted, being under the impression that planters were a daring race apart, who defied convention in all sorts of delightful ways. Imagine, therefore, my disappointment when I discovered that my hosts were just the same as other mortals; why, they did not even sit down to lunch in red shirts and gum-boots or talk of brandy pawnee, which sort of Jos Sedley atmosphere I had—as a former good “Punjaubi”—very naturally expected to find in this “benighted” part of India. I have a distinct grievance against the tea-planter: he does not live up to his picturesquely wicked reputation. Indeed, I misdoubt if he is wicked at all; and I believe that, like Algernon in “The Importance of being Earnest,” he has been leading a double life all these years, pretending to be wicked, and really being good all the time. This, as Cecily remarks upon the same page, is inexcusably deceitful, besides being hypocritical as well. Anyhow, good or wicked, just or unjust, we all sat down to as excellent a *déjeuner* as any man could find in India outside the Bombay Yacht Club, and one which, speaking for the Proconsular party, we had honestly earned.

From the conversation that ensued at lunch I gathered

that the district was teeming with big game. My neighbour on the right had, upon the night previous to our arrival, fired at but missed a fine tiger in the precincts of his garden; and, in addition, a railway official on the opposite side of the table informed me, with great *naïveté*, that it was not an uncommon matter for his trains to be held up by the wild elephant that wandered aimlessly upon the railway line. A short time ago a planter and his wife had the disagreeable experience of being escorted down the road for nearly a mile by a tiger that cantered amiably alongside their buggy, until wearying of this form of exercise the hungry brute sprang boldly upon their pony, and tearing it to the ground devoured it on the spot, leaving the human members of the party to complete their journey as best they could.

Our planter hosts were assembled for the week-end at Headquarters, where the manager of their company resides. “Tea” is a very important industry in Eastern India, and both companies and individuals acquire whole tracts of land for their “gardens” upon leases that vary both in length and in conditions. The planters themselves live dotted about the remote countryside on their lonely estates, but generally manage to assemble once a week at some established rendezvous for a game of polo and a dinner at the club. The local roads are rough and ready, particularly

during the rainy season; but your planter is not the sort of man to be baffled by minor details of this nature, for, after all, the ubiquitous Ford (no advertisement!) and the trotting buggy of American origin can usually be relied upon to convey their owners axle-deep through miry rut and over swampy marsh until the haven of their search is reached, and the trials of the road forgotten among the delights of civilised comfort.

The life of a tea-planter strikes the casual observer as being a very happy one, and the whole atmosphere of this countryside is redolent of old Virginia before the Civil War: that is to say, a local landed squirearchy controlling cheap, adequate—and here, contented—native labour, while they enjoy an open-air and open-handed existence in a sportsman's paradise, among hospitable friends of similarly generous tastes and free and easy habits. The pleasantly informal nature of society in such districts is doubly welcome to the unsophisticated traveller fresh from the haunts of official Anglo-India, and it was in fact with the greatest regret that we tore ourselves away from these Arcadian scenes in order to return to the steam-yacht and to the river. Here life for the last ten days has been deadly monotonous, or what the Proconsul justly calls "one d——d thing after another." In moments of depression and gloom—as a result of punkah ropes breaking or electric fans sulk-

ing—the Proconsul is inclined to classify the whole of human existence under this pessimistic definition. The rush and swirl of a thirty-pound mahseer, however, will always restore his lost optimism, as, rod in hand and shikari in attendance, he seeks an evening's distraction upon the river, freed alike from the cares of office and the mosquito-like attentions of his too persistent P.A.

He is at this moment hatching some plot with his shikari against the beautiful and innocent Indian salmon. I can just see them in the dusk of the stern-sheets of the houseboat behind the yacht. His three dogs are eyeing him with cold disapproval, for fish are no fun unless you are a cat. All is utterly peaceful, calm, and silent, save for the rhythmical slap, slap, slap of the current against our sun-blistered hull; and I feel so consciously virtuous—that "rest-after-toil" sort of feeling—that I absolutely refuse to go on writing in this untidy diary until to-morrow night.

"Ohe, bearer! Cigarettes and peg *lao*—your master is 'eating' leisure!"

My office on board the steam-yacht is situated over the starboard paddle-wheel, and so—when I neglect my work—I have an excellent view across the river and its busy shipping. Daily we pick up our *dak*—i.e., our post-bag—together with our telegrams and Reuters; and so, even

when in the depths of the Province, we are still in touch with the outside world as represented by London and Simla.

I begin operations about 7 A.M., and break the back of the morning's mail before breakfast. Deputations of cultivators, journalists, or lawyers desire audiences at our next halting-place, and, having endorsed their letters, I pass them on through a secretary to the Proconsul for his orders as to time, place, and expediency. A local bard sends a complimentary poem in praise of the Proconsul's many personal virtues, together with a subtle suggestion that a relation in the Forest Department may well receive promotion at an early date. A harassed Subdivisional officer wires that the recent floods have destroyed half the crops in his district, and a police official reports the capture of a notorious band of dacoits.

In fact, a P.A.'s office is rather like a central news agency, and the catholic nature of the news that filters through often opens up new avenues of thought in worlds that formerly did not exist for me. How would the reader reply to the following telegram, couched in the purest English?—

"Kindly supply urgently Government Dispensary for the district of X—; at present swallowing the bitter pills of Calvinism."

A reference to the district

of X— reveals the existence of a Welsh Medical Mission that, apparently—judging from this agonised appeal—mixes a little stern theology with its otherwise freely-given medicine.

In to-day's telegrams I note the political assassination of another police official in Bengal. I wonder how many people in England realise the ever-latent peril that dogs the steps of the Executive Civil Services of India. One of our own Members of Council was shot in the lung some time ago, but happily recovered from the wound. His would-be murderer—an educated Indian extremist—employed a .450 revolver in the crush of a crowded railway platform, and fled, undetected, amid the confusion that his crime had caused. Would the English politician of a certain mentally untidy stamp be so fulsomely encouraging to every casual Indian "idealist" whom he may happen to meet in South Kensington, if he knew (but he knows *Nothing*) anything of the results of encouraging frank Nihilism?

It is useless for the Little Englander to waste his sympathy upon "oppressed patriots" in connection with such bloody incidents, because these crimes are detested and execrated by the people of India themselves. The great masses of the peasantry regard our tolerance of such a state of affairs as an indication of lunacy—or weakness; while the "progressives" among the anglicised Indians view with

sincere dismay such sporadic outbursts of anarchy, if for no other reason than that they realise that anarchy spells inevitable retrogression, so far as all native political power and progress are concerned. Of the actual "extremists" themselves it is perhaps difficult for an Englishman to write with an unbiassed mind, but putting aside the very real fact that British rule in India is firmly established with the full moral support of probably eight-tenths of the people—who at least appreciate its practical value—this minority of bomb-articulate babus is solely recruited from impatient youth, from unbalanced fanaticism, and—mostly—from scoundrels pure and simple, who, to their lofty patriotism, add a system of calculated dacoity and indiscriminate train-wrecking that provokes a reign of terror over thousands of their unfortunate fellow-countrymen. With such social trash, the noble sentiment as expressed in the national cheer of *Bande Mataram*¹ is an insincere parrot-cry upon the blasphemous lips that utter it; and such gentry—robbers, murderers, and tongue-in-cheek poseurs—can claim sympathy from no honest man, be the honest man white or brown. They were born for the gallows, and the most distressing fact about them is that they seldom get their deserts; for while the "Little Englander" section of the House of Com-

mons is ever ready to accuse its fellow-countrymen abroad of tyranny and oppression, it reserves to itself, in its ignorance, the right to protect all that is vile and harmful both to the Empire as a whole and to India in particular. If more were needed to prove the insincerity and the moral depravity of the Indian anarchist, it is only necessary to study certain police reports on the subject, which tell strange facts about the psychology of these criminals—facts that cannot be discussed in these pages on account of the obscene horrors with which they deal. Suffice to say that enthusiastic youth is deliberately demoralised and debauched in secret political schools established for this single purpose, before the dagger, the bomb, or the revolver is thrust into his hand; and when finally his masters—who risk nothing themselves—have polluted his whole mind and transformed him into something a little less than human and a little more than animal, the youth will murder those whom he is *bidden* to murder—European or fellow-countryman—without compunction, without comment, and without understanding. That such very ordinary and tedious enemies to established law and order should exist in British India is not particularly surprising; that they should be indirectly encouraged by the misdirected sentimentalism of certain

¹ Hail, Motherland !

English notoriety-hunters at Westminster is deplorable. However, it is no part of a P.A.'s duties to lay down the law upon problems that distract even Indian Viceroy—he is merely expected to make himself useful in humbler ways. My immediate task, for instance, is not connected with anything so sublime as politics, but merely to urge upon the captain of the yacht the necessity of coaling at an early date, and of buying a new anchor before we are all drowned in the next cyclone.

This Brahmaputra is a strange river, and an extended cruise upon it a strange experience. In flood the stream in places is six or seven miles broad, and this breadth, combined with mist and rain, produces the illusion of being out in open sea. At times no land is visible at all, and a vast expanse of heaving, leaden water, that stretches from one horizon to another, embraces the whole scene and induces *mal de mer*. The current is furiously strong, and when sudden and frequent gales tear boats and steamers from their moorings, considerable danger is to be anticipated for those on board.

Brahmaputra, by the way, is the Sanskrit for "Son of Brahma" (or God), and there is a quaint and beautiful legend about how the river was first led to the sea by an old-time saint, who, with axe and plough and simple faith, hewed a channel for the stream through the walls of the dizzy Himalaya and

across the heavy jungles of Assam. The saint must have had a journey that was crowded with incident, for the course of the river is marked by a hundred shrines that keep green the memory of his every adventure by the way. Like most other saints of myth and legend, he seems to have been a truly deplorable character when judged by modern standards of morality, if for no other reason than that, in a moment of enthusiasm, he beheaded his mother with his own hands. But perhaps this was before he "got religion"; anyhow, we will hope so. Some of the villagers who live along the banks seem almost amphibious in their habits, because during three or four months of every year the whole of the country is flooded, and houses have to be perched upon piles. Locomotion is by dug-out or raft, and I am incredibly informed that the children *swim* to school!

On the top of this information I have another traveller's tale to tell, but this one is literally true. There is a certain breed of bird here—of the cormorant family, I fancy—that secures its food as follows: Some hundreds (or thousands) of them flock together, and, forming up in line upon the surface of the water, advance from the middle of the river towards the bank, making a prodigious commotion by flapping their wings. The noise and general disturbance is so great that the fish become terrified, and

flee before them towards the bank to get out of their way; upon arrival in the shallows the birds secure their panic-stricken prey with the greatest of ease and gorge themselves upon the fish, most of which they swallow whole. But—and here comes the cream of the whole story—as soon as the intelligent villagers see what is in the wind, they too claim a share of the spoils, and run down to the bank, beating gongs and drums. The effect of this is to alarm the birds in *their* turn, who, being too gorged to fly away, have to discard their suppers upon the bank before they can escape! It is not, perhaps, a nice way of obtaining one's fish; but the local peasant is not hypersensitive in such matters, and there is a sort of poetic justice about the method employed that appeals to one's imagination.

Among the local curiosities, we witnessed a boat-race to-day. There were three entries, and six races—for the "entries" entered over and over again. Two of the boats were manned by boys from the High School, and the third was paddled by fishermen. The "boats" are, in reality, long, narrow canoes which hold from twenty to forty persons, some of whom paddle while the rest encourage them with song and cymbals. I cannot say who won; down they came in a dashing whirl of spray and music, flashed past us, and were out of sight again round a bend in the river before you

knew what had happened. I subsequently met the crews, who fell upon me with great excitement as they demanded my opinion of their efforts. They were all very polite, the boys in particular very anxious to air their English upon a stranger who was not a school-master, and so in ten minutes we had all become the best of friends.

Next day the Proconsul distributed prizes at the High School, visited the local leper asylum, and inspected a jail. The prize-giving was one of the most embarrassing functions that it has ever been my lot to attend. Imagine yourself perched in a awesome isolation upon a platform in a hall crowded with the youth of India, who, one and all, proceed to fix you with the emotionless stare of dignified Asia, while, lynx-like, they watch your every movement. An Indian harmonium breaks suddenly in upon the heavy silence, and a high-caste Bengali boy, clad in his beautiful national dress, rises with graceful indolence and *salāms* to the Proconsul before delivering his song of welcome. The old Sanskrit verses are sung in a voice of singular charm and silver clarity, while the barefooted boy wanders carelessly around the English visitors, lazily plucking the petals from a pale pink lotus-flower as he sings his dreamy refrain. The notes rise and fall, and then die away in hushed mystery, as the posing singer bows his head upon his youthful breast. Lifting his insolently well-bred

eyes again, he is handed three heavy garlands of exotic blossom, with which he now encircles the necks of the Proconsul, the Chief Secretary, and my unworthy self. He retires with dignity, and his place is taken by a horrible youth, in a pork-pie hat, who renders Casabianca in stilted English. Such is young India—a strange mixture of artistic consciousness and philistine attainment.

The prizes are distributed, speeches are delivered, the boys sing "God Save the King," and we depart for the leper asylum a mile away.

The lepers are broken men from every walk of life. Here a tea coolie and there an expleader. They live their dreadful lives in small grass huts of their own, and are not herded indiscriminately together. Their faces show no signs of active unhappiness,—rather a wooden resignation, a fatalistic acceptance of destiny and *kismet*. I offered one old man a handful of cigarettes, and a grateful smile illuminated his stricken features as he chatted quite cheerfully about his daily life. There is no despair, no cursing of God, and no morbid self-pity among these men. Is it that the East lives nearer the spiritual world than the West, that it is so indifferent to material disaster?

And so, to the jail. There is something dreadful about a prison, with its hundreds of human slaves working, eating, and sleeping at the direction of their fellow-men, who are

so brutally free. One wonders what wrong that rather gentle-faced Madonna committed that necessitated her incarceration. You inquire, and are staggered by the reply. "That one? Oh, *she* murdered her husband, brother, and four children with a meat chopper."

"But why wasn't she hanged?"

Explanations follow. The prison is airy, cool, and sanitary, and I am not surprised to learn that the life of the convict in India is apt to be longer than that of his free brother outside the prison walls. We return to the steamer, and soon the city is astern, a mere smudge upon the sunlit river.

It is near this particular village that the main stream of Mother Ganges, feeling lonely, suddenly joins the Brahmaputra as a mere *tributary*, while her other waters flow on in topographical confusion to her wriggling mouths in Bengal. After this confluence, the Brahmaputra loses its distinctive name, and the united flood is known in Sanskrit as *Kirtinasa*—"the Destroyer of Glories"—in memory of the awful havoc that it has wrought in the past. This, at least, is the information given me by my uncanny-looking Kassia servant, a Mongolian-featured youth from the hills, whom I have not described before, who is neither Mohamedan nor Hindu, but who propitiates snakes, and who, utterly illogical—after his labours with the snakes—believes in no hereafter that

is comprehensible to my poor intellect.

In the far distance, beyond the right bank of the river, lies the Bhutan frontier, and to the farther and yet more distant North-East, beyond Upper Burma, the Yang Tsi Kiang bends away from its twin brother in Central Asia, and turns upon its weary yellow journey across the Celestial Empire. It is an interesting part of the planet,—this Province that I have not yet named, —where Burma and Thibet are our neighbours and China a kindly, nodding friend across the way. Mount Everest is not far distant, and Ganges' "mouths of shifting sand" are, as we have already seen, in an adjacent Bengal; in fact, half the geographical interests of our childhood's days are immediately and really around us, and are no longer vague splashes of doubtful colour upon a spherical globe or a Mercator's projection.

We have been told so often that India is an "Imperial problem" that most of us are sick of the subject, and yet how in the world are we to escape from it? To wander at leisure among India's various peoples and to catch glimpses of its *vie intime* is like a journey from Moscow to Madrid in its change and complexity. To the North we are a crude, continental State, with a grim and undesirable military frontier many hundreds of miles in length; to the South we are a complicated community, feverishly engaged upon work-

ing out our political salvation. On our frontiers we are bloodily primitive, and behind them we are delicately complex.

Near Peshawar lives Mahmud Khan, border baron and murderer; in Calcutta, Rabindranath Tagore, philosopher and poet.

How are we to foster an Indian *National* spirit amid three hundred million human beings, who not only differ in race, religion, and tradition, but who also are *centuries of time* apart as well? This reflection is not cheap pessimism directed against the advocates of Indian progress; on the contrary, unless our great Asiatic Adventure is to prove a dismal failure, Englishmen *must* find the solution to such baffling problems. Not until India stands a *partner* and not a *vassal* of the British *Raj* will our work be completed or our laurels won as successful administrators. The Kipling school scoffs at the practicability of such an attainment; the Doctor Rutherfords, Annie Besants, and their like ignore its difficulties; but if we do not lose heart, and if young India can only be taught that deeds, not words, lead to accomplished facts, then victory will be within our grasp, and we shall have accomplished what no other Imperial race has ever attempted. India owes England a debt—that cannot be gainsaid—but England owes a *duty* to India which is even more important. We owe it to the Indian to fit him for Imperial citizenship—not merely to fit him for the

vulgar *advantages* of that citizenship, which the sentiment-
alists among our own race
now demand for him prema-
turely—but also to fit him for
its responsibilities and penal-
ties as well. At the present
moment an Indian suffers from
many Imperial disabilities, but
he also enjoys many Imperial
immunities. He possesses no
vote, but, on the other hand,
he is not conscripted for war.
If he is governed by a British
bureaucracy, he is also pro-
tected by a British Fleet.

There is an old Moorish
saying that “a far journey
in the company of friends is
lightening to the soul albeit
burdensome to the body,” and
this I have lately discovered
is entirely true. Despite
prickly heat, mosquitoes, and
malaria, dark rumours that the
cook has cholera (I wish he
had—I hate him!), and the
general obsession of *babudom*,
chaprassi-ana, and brain-rack-
ing cipher telegrams that seem
at first sight so much gibberish,
the whole of this journey has
been, to me at least, a happy
vagabondage and an experience
of fascinating interest.

Our tour is not yet over,
but I close my diary to-night,
for the very sufficient reason
that I have come to the last
page in it.

My young Mohamedan or-
derly, Shah Sowar, is pacing
the deck above me, like a sulky
panther-cub, wondering when
his Sahib will have finished his
stupid writing and be ready to
catch a fish. I must not keep
him waiting any longer, or I
shall get into trouble again,
for the evening has now come
and the mahseer are on the
feed. The mighty river is all
aglow with tired amber sunset,
the feathery islands upon its
unrippled bosom blaze with
jewelled beauty, the early fire-
fly sparkles in the *crepuscule*,
and from the distant bank
upon our starboard beam comes
the soft and scented lowing
of white and sacred kine. A
waft of sickly incense from a
far-off temple . . . a dot of
scarlet fire beneath a village
tree . . . a passing shadow
on shore that is a howdahed
elephant, and India passes—
suddenly—into night and into
silence.

ZERES.

SOME ASPECTS OF GERMAN WAR LITERATURE.

IT has lately been my lot to read a great many German books which have been issued since the War began. All sorts and kinds have come to my net—political essays, diaries, letters of men at the front, novels, newspaper articles and periodicals descriptive of war-doings in general and personal reminiscences in particular, poems, comic calendars, even down to children's picture-books. From official compendiums, War chronicles compiled by authority, through biographies, sermons, and records of "our special correspondent's" journeys to the different fronts, down to extravaganzas and the lowest depths of cheap and venomous caricatures, I have waded through a large portion of what I think may fairly be considered the representative popular literature of the present day in Germany.

Nor have I missed out many of the books, innocent in appearance, some in Spanish, some Dutch, some French or English, but mostly German, which have been—very clumsily for the most part—written to order and issued under harmless names and over imaginary signatures, with the one object of inflaming German and neutral passions against the Allies—chiefly, of course, against England. But it is not of these that I wish to speak just at present.

The above, then, as I say, may be taken as representative

of the Literary output of Germany during the last two and a half years; and it may perhaps be of interest to some to read of the general impression that they have left on my mind.

First and foremost: all these books have been censored. And this we must perpetually bear in mind when considering their contents. For not a single sentence in any of these books is allowed to breathe anything but complete satisfaction with all that has occurred and the most sublime confidence in the future.

Not a word is there of shortage of food, of heavy losses, of discontent, of doubt regarding the future. Throughout, there is the sense of the triumphant march of a conqueror on his road to a well-earned peace, and of a religious faith in the righteousness of his cause. Throughout, there is the echo of the greatness of the German "Kultur," and of the happiness that it will bring to the conquered (*sic*) nations; and throughout, there is the expression of the firm belief of the German that this wicked world-war has been thrust upon him by the fiendish machination of the Allies, and that the Empire has only been saved by the heroism of its soldiers.

Such is the general sense of this mass of literature. It is difficult to know which to admire most—the resolution of German Censorship and auth-

ority in allowing nothing to appear except what is absolutely favourable to Germany, or the resolution of the people in swallowing all and everything that is put before them by that same authority.

For undoubtedly they not only swallow this stuff, but they believe in it eagerly. There is also a ring of truth and sincerity about nearly all these books which is not of artificial production, nor induced by the blue pencil of the Censor. The authors really and truly believe what they write, with a firm and entire faith in themselves and in the power of their great Empire. Such a thing as a military defeat is to them an absolutely unthinkable idea; such a thing as financial or industrial exhaustion is to them equally impossible. They have the consciousness of immense military power, far above that of any other Army; and as for wealth and perseverance, they know that they have almost unlimited supplies of each. "A hard time must no doubt be expected," they say, "but we need only grit our teeth and work away, and we shall exhaust the Allies before they can exhaust us, and then—then it will be for us to dictate the terms of peace to the rest of the world."

This State-fostered confidence is, verily, a thing of which Germany may be proud, for it is a weapon of which it will be impossible to deprive her—till the very last moment. It has been forged by the muscular will of the State out of the true steel of German patriotism: by deliberate organisa-

tion, by calling on what is noblest in human nature, by appeals to ambition and to hatred, and by the ruthless suppression of all inconvenient truth. And the result is good; for with the usual subservience of the German character to authority has come the unshakable conviction that, whatever happens, Germany *cannot* be beaten.

Let us look at a few of these books.

A large proportion of them are records by men who have been at the front or who are there still. They recount their personal experiences: in the ranks as fighters, behind the lines as Red Cross or Sanitation people, flitting to and fro as newspaper correspondents, the guests of various Princes and Excellencies (beslobbered of course with praise); some neutral subjects (Swiss, Swedish, Dutch, Spanish—no Americans) on the look-out for "copy" and the "truth," records from Poland, from Gallipoli, from Flanders, Tsingtau, Africa, Chile, the Dolomites, the Argonne—everywhere where the shadow of war is passing. And the burden of their song throughout is the glorious and irresistible might of Germany and the heroism of her children.

Verily might a man from the moon, descending ignorantly on this world, conclude from this mass of literature that the Armies of Germany had never sustained a check, and that they were still moving in invincible array against their cowering enemies; that the German soldier was the most

heroic, the kindest and most tender-hearted of mortals; that never had he or his officer acted in any but the loftiest and noblest manner; whilst his enemies, and particularly the English, had demeaned themselves by loathsome and unspeakable barbarities, by robbery, by treachery, by abuse of the Red Cross and the white flag, by violations of International Law, and, horror of horrors, by disregard of the Geneva and Hague Conventions.

We are far from disputing the fact that the German Empire has shown itself a marvellous organisation of preparedness, strength, and military efficiency. To the Germans themselves, moreover, the way in which their Army has not only withstood the attacks of numerous enemies, but has carried the war into hostile countries, must give them well-grounded faith indeed. Nor do we deny that the German soldier is a hard-working and well-disciplined creature, a tough fighter, and, when left to his own devices, often docile and simple-minded. But to hold him up as a paragon of all the virtues and as the incarnation only of what is noble and gentle, and to pass over in silence the innumerable acts of falsehood and brutality, and even those of horrible barbarity, of which he and his superiors have been guilty, whilst falsely attributing similar acts only to his enemies, is to act with a lack of perception, both of truth and of humour, of which

only a German could be capable.

And when it comes to the description of the actual fighting, the same determination to magnify the successes and obliterate the set-backs is seen. The tendency to do so is set by the General Staff, and is eagerly followed by the smaller fry—generally at the cost of truth.

Take the Great Headquarters' official *communiqués* during the period in which von Kluck's right flank was threatened and the whole German Army was driven back in the battles of the Marne. The threatening movement of the French Sixth Army under Maunoury began to be felt by the Germans on the 5th September; the advance of the Allies began on the 6th, and by the 12th the Germans had been thrown back across the Marne and on to the farther bank of the Aisne, where they dug themselves in in desperate haste. Yet between the 3rd and the 13th the *only* official reference to the fighting in this western theatre of war was as follows:—

Berlin, 10th Sept.: "The detachments which had advanced along and beyond the Marne to the east of Paris were attacked by superior numbers coming from Paris and from between Meaux and Montmirail. They contained the enemy, and, after terrific battles lasting two days, they progressed themselves. On hearing of the approach of new and strong hostile

columns, their wing retired without being pursued at any point.

"In the course of these fights 50 guns and several thousand prisoners were captured."

On the 13th we have the following: "The operations, of which the details cannot yet be published, have resulted in a new battle which is favourable to us. The unfavourable news regarding ourselves published by the enemy by every means at his disposal is false."

One could hardly have a better instance of a semi-truth more vigorously distorted so as to present a three-quarter lie. But this was all the news that was contemptuously chucked to the German people, and gratefully swallowed by them.

Later on, many were the expedients utilised to cover the fact that German strategy had come hopelessly to grief in this instance, and that the flank which should have been preponderatingly strong had been left correspondingly weak—with what might have been almost fatal results: but to investigate these numerous and often self-contradictory excuses would be outside the scope of this paper.

Turning to the innumerable "War Chronicles," "Diaries of the War," "War Calendars," and such like, which give, often day by day, the official *communiqués* and numberless unofficial telegrams and articles culled from a hundred

sources, we are struck by the same want of candour. *Never* is a reverse or loss (except that of an occasional ship or two) given in its entirety; where the Germans have been driven back or suffered heavy losses the statement is always: "A small portion of our forces withdrew a short distance for strategical (never 'tactical') reasons"; "we inflicted heavy losses on the enemy"; "we left such and such a village in order better to strengthen our position," and so on. In every case losses are minimised and successes magnified, till one can hardly see how the stay-at-home German can believe anything else than that his troops are invariably victorious.

Up to the present, no official History of the War is being published. The Great Headquarters has issued short pamphlets about individual portions of the fighting, written almost immediately after the event and, of course, suppressing any inconvenient truths and lauding to the skies the performance of their own troops,¹ but beyond these no historical book has been issued by authority, though many volumes containing day-by-day chronicles (notably the 'Chronik des Deutschen Krieges,' Beck, Munich) have appeared.

Lies, however, especially about the British, are sedulously spread by authority. One letter from the front,

¹ Compare the official German History of the Franco-German War (1870-71) written on precisely the same lines.

which reads as genuine, relates how a thousand British, dressed in German uniforms, induced a large number of Germans to come to them and then shot them down; and again, how two hundred British advanced in double rank, the front rank holding up their hands in token of surrender, whilst the rear rank, lying down, shot through the front rank's legs; and finishes by saying, "I should not have believed that the English were capable of such a thing, but, although I did not see it myself, it was published in Divisional Orders, and therefore it must be true." Other official (and unofficial) reports state how the British almost invariably use "dumdum" bullets, and when they have not got them, cut off the tops of their bullets by means of their "cut-off"; how the British, since the beginning of the war, used poisonous gas-shells, and how the Germans in retaliation were forced to use gas, "of a mild and perhaps temporarily-incommoding¹ nature" (*sic*); how they shot at flags of truce, Red Cross and Red Crescent flags; how they tortured the German prisoners and gouged out the eyes of the wounded; and innumerable stories of the same sort.

Remember that the Germans have heard *only* such stories about us, and that these have been officially distributed, and are, *therefore*, true (!); remember that these stories are not only believed, but discussed and passed from paper to paper

and from mouth to mouth—with probably gross exaggeration—not throughout the German Empire alone, but through other hostile and neutral countries, wherever the poisonous tongue of German propaganda spreads its slanderous atmosphere; and then try to imagine the love that Germany and other countries are likely to bear us after the war.

Not content with these purely slanderous lies, this German literature also teems with specific misstatements of fighting that has taken place. The case of the battles of the Marne has already been referred to; but many other examples there are. For instance, take our reembarkations from the Gallipoli Peninsula, where the extraordinarily excellent work of Army and Navy combined succeeded in embarking the whole of our Expeditionary Force from the immediate front of an enemy far superior in numbers and artillery at the cost of only a few men wounded. The newspaper correspondent of the 'Lokal Anzeiger,' who was actually present, has the effrontery to relate a story to the effect that "Field-Marshal Liman von Sanders had now decided that the time had come to sweep the enemy into the sea. By means of careful staff-work, seconded by the gallant efforts of our Allies, the Turkish Army arose, poured in a storm of shot and shell, and drove the cowardly enemy into the sea. The shores were littered with

¹ "Atem-erschwerender," i.e., making breathing difficult.

hundreds of the English dead, and they were shot down in scores as they fled in confusion to their boats. The fire was continued on these as they scattered in hopeless disorder towards their ships, and hundreds more must have been killed in the water." Not only are the Germans given this tale, but an actual genuine Staff Officer of Liman von Sanders (who wisely suppresses his own name) writes a similar, though not quite such a highly coloured, account of the movement in his expanded diary of the Gallipoli campaign. What are we to think of the much-advertised "honour" of the German officers after this example?

A correspondent, who was with the first advance of the Turks over the desert, but carefully suppresses all dates and names of places, writes that on arrival at the Suez Canal the Turks made a slight reconnaissance, but finding that there were 30,000 British troops at the one place which they had selected (which he carefully omits to specify), considered that it was not worth while to attack them with only 12,000 men. He also relates numerous instances of our firing on Turkish ambulances and our brutality to the Turkish wounded, stating that our native allies (the Arabs) went over to the enemy, and that we had not dared to use Egyptian troops, as we knew they would do the same.¹

Even another usually well-informed and level-headed officer, Colonel Immanuel, whose accounts are, as a rule, impartial and sober-minded, states that, according to his official information, the Bulgarians attacked the French and ourselves at Doiran and gained a brilliant victory, causing us a loss of 11,000 men. We do not remember, ourselves, to have heard of this defeat, and even Colonel Immanuel has the grace to say that he has been unable to obtain any details of the action!

Another account of the German (first) gas attack at Ypres (22nd April 1915) gives an entirely false version of the action, stating that the British lines were broken through, and that the Germans pursued them to places which they never reached—not mentioning the action of the French in the matter, nor the gallant defence by the Canadians at that most critical juncture. But to multiply instances of the sort would only weary the reader. We might only mention in passing that the loss of the German colonies is never referred to except in books individually describing some of the fighting there. I need perhaps scarcely add that, in several books describing the capture of Tsingtau, the English are always described as having bribed the Japanese to do all the fighting, because they were afraid of fighting themselves. A tremendous fuss is also made

¹ It was Egyptian artillery which was largely responsible for the damage inflicted on the enemy on the Suez Canal.

because, after the fall of the town, we objected to the Germans making improper use of a hospital ship in which they sent away their non-combatants under the protection of the Red Cross.

They accuse us also of bombarding the town of Dar-es-Salaam without cause, entirely suppressing the act of black treachery on their part which obliged us to do so.

But enough of such instances. What is more serious is the perpetually reiterated accusation of a carefully-organised campaign of wilful and slanderous lies carried on by our Press throughout the war. In German eyes every statement, however vile and calumniating, made by their own Press, is gospel truth, and every word written in our own—which, of course, they believe to be directed entirely by Government, like their own—a lie. One pitiful attempt there is,¹ made in all sincerity, to prove our Press statements untrue, generally by a mere assertion on the part of the writer that they are untrue! and in some cases by a reference to German official refutations, as if that clinched the matter. But of reference to actual facts, evidence, or witnesses, there is none whatever. Even when considering well-meant efforts of this kind, one can only deplore the fact that the German mind is quite incapable of appreciating or balancing the

value of evidence. Asseveration, or one-sided assertion, takes the place of the judicial instinct in the Teuton brain.

Take now the case of the bombardment of Reims Cathedral. We have an official pamphlet,² officially stating, on sworn evidence, that, in consequence of a French observation-post being seen on the left tower, one single mortar shell was fired at it—which drove the O.P. off—on the 19th September (mark the date), and that another shell went accidentally through the roof on the 22nd or 23rd. This was all, and this is the official conclusion and pronouncement.

Unfortunately for the Germans, in their own appendices to the same pamphlet, three separate German witnesses swear distinctly that the Cathedral was shelled for two hours on the 18th, and it was again shelled on the 19th, "including a shell on the left tower."

Is this only shockingly bad editing, or is it in pursuance of the unwritten law in Germany that, whatever a witness may say about an incident, it is the supreme authority who lays down what really happened? (*Cf.* once more the Bode-Lucas-Lionardo da Vinci joke.)

To turn now to another aspect.

Whilst narrating in the greatest detail—in those books

¹ All Lies—der Lügenfeldzug unserer Feinde, by R. Anton (Zehrfeld, Leipzig).

² Die Beschussung der Kathedrale von Reims (Prussian W.O., 1915).

which give personal reminiscences of the fighting — all that occurred in the narrator's neighbourhood, it is a very remarkable thing that every one of the authors takes an intensely serious view of things. The German is notoriously bereft of wit, and one can hardly expect him to make a really amusing book out of a war diary: if you asked him to try, he would only stare, and consider you mad. But what is really striking in these innumerable records of personal experience is that there is not only not a trace of humour, but hardly even a trace of cheerfulness, of light-heartedness, of good-fellowship — nor, need I add, of a sportsmanlike feeling. Of reflection, of deep feeling, of patriotism, of duty, and of an iron determination to bear hardships uncomplainingly, yes; and of grumbling and bad temper, yes; also of kindness and readiness to help each other, and oceans of domestic and home feelings, sometimes charmingly expressed (as of a subaltern who addresses his mother as "Liebe goldene kleine Mama!"). But of bright-heartedness, and of an irresistible propensity to see the comic side of things and to express it amusingly, such as lighten so many thousands of our own men's letters and reminiscences — not an atom. Everything is taken *au grand sérieux*: even comic episodes (of which there are but few) are described with a heavy and serious pen.

On the other hand, expres-

sions of hatred, especially of course for the British, are, I regret to say, extremely numerous. Sometimes a writer "lets himself go," for a page or more, in venomous, undiluted, savage hatred; mostly is it on the subject of British cupidity, treachery, arrogance, brutality, or other charming quality which has been assigned to us for many years past by the ignorant German schoolmaster, fed from above. Sometimes also it is for those Belgian civilians who, according to the German account (and it must be noted that very circumstantial evidence is given in many cases), shot from the windows and murdered many of their wounded. On the Eastern front the hatred is mostly reserved for the Cossacks, some of whom appear, according to the German narratives, in spite of the orders of their superiors, to have behaved in East Prussia just as the Germans did in Belgium and Northern France. Less often, and in fact seldom, is it expressed for the French: for the word seems to have gone forth, and the Censor to have supported it, that the French were not to be abused.

But never, or hardly ever, is a generous word said for the enemy. When a small body of the French, British, or Russians, fighting gallantly to the last man, is surrounded and exterminated by the Germans, there is only savage exultation in the deed — no pity or tribute to the fallen foe. The only instance to the contrary which

I can remember, out of the (literally) hundreds of books which I have investigated, is the case of the French Commandant of Les Ayvelles, when his men surrendered and he committed suicide; to him the Germans erected a cross and an inscription—"To a French officer who did his duty." Otherwise the most generous appreciation is of the style of the remark—"They are tough and courageous fighters," or, "The English prisoners were not quite such brutes as I expected"; or, when some Russian prisoners, in icy weather, were mercilessly deprived of their greatcoats: "After all, our men wanted the coats, and it is the fortune of war—though they must have shivered a bit."

Not a word, however, is allowed to be printed of any local reverses, and any mention of serious losses or of the falling back of the larger unit to which the author belongs is studiously omitted: so that it becomes difficult to follow its movement on a map. When the food is good and plentiful, long descriptions are given; when it is bad, or even wanting, not a word. No complaints are allowed in print, and, of course, least of all any opinion as to the capacity of a superior or any criticism of military measures. According to all these records, indeed, the war is one series of triumphs and victorious advances, always with desperate losses to the enemy and very few to themselves. And so the whole of Germany has been led to be-

lieve—that their Army is invariably successful and that their leaders are infallible.

This remark reminds me that the German printers of the books I have read must be getting tired of composing the word "Hindenburg"—who figures ten times as often as the Emperor—and of setting up his photographic *cliché*.

Besides photos of the popular hero, however, there are a large number of excellent cheap war albums full of quite first-rate photographs. War scenes of every description, portraits of dozens of Generals, scenes in the prison camps (with descriptions which make them out to be a series of perfect paradises), scenes on the Western, Russian, Italian, Serbian, Dardanelles, and Turkish fronts, &c. The camera indeed seems to enjoy a much more extended use by the enemy than by ourselves.

In the matter of pictures and their reproduction the books are rather disappointing. Many are the reproductions, but the drawings are as a rule poor—rather of the extra-modern-almost-futurist type, and poor at that. Some, of course, are good—for we must not, whilst deploring the venomous outlook of Munich, deny its artistic capacity; but, on the whole, the pictures are not up to the British standard, many of them being rough and ill-drawn in the extreme. Maps are, however, good and plentiful; and in this respect I cannot help drawing attention to a halfpenny atlas of the war fronts, which gives quite a

dozen maps—not bad at all at the price, but of course on very inferior paper and roughly produced. Still, it shows the pains that are taken to distribute, even to the very poorest, information about the war, and the avidity with which this is accepted.

The Poetic Muse also often makes her appearance. Not content with being represented in half a dozen books of verse, most of which is—to put it politely—extremely moderate, she bursts her way into a large number of the volumes consecrated to personal reminiscences. It is indeed remarkable how many of these authors make pretensions to the gift of song: our own indeed are prosaic in comparison—as regards quantity, I mean, though certainly not as to quality. Some of the verse is quite good, more particularly when on the sentimental side; but many of the heroic stanzas, containing as much abuse of the enemy as devotion to the Fatherland, are almost comically bad in their ruggedness: it is as though the spirit of war and murder were present, but quite incapable of expressing itself. On the other hand, many of the marching songs—though an æsthete might perhaps be shocked at the want of taste in some—are excellent, and give full expression to the spirit for which they are written.

Numerous further instances of the way in which information, with a purpose, is spread

broadcast are evidenced in the books written for children. One in particular calls for note. It is a fair-sized book,¹ with plenty of good pictures, and recounts the adventures of a heroic youth of noble and gentle character who takes part as a volunteer in nearly every episode of the war, and receives letters from friends engaged in all the other episodes—*Lusitania*, Italian “treachery,” Dardanelles, Zeppelins, &c. It is an excellent and popular method of inculcating full and one-sided knowledge of the war and hatred of the enemy in the youthful generation, and is very characteristic of German method and thoroughness. I cannot help thinking that it might well be imitated (bar the one-sidedness and hatred) in this country with advantage. Another example of thoroughness may, by the way, be found in a sycophantic book about the German army, written by an Austrian journalist, but printed in Germany; for, with a view to its circulation in Austria, the copies have been stuffed with loose picture post-cards of the Emperor, the Crown Prince, Hindenburg (of course), and other heroes!

Of a worse type are the books deliberately written to mislead others, both Germans and neutrals. These have mostly harmless titles and a harmless appearance, but they are easily to be recognised by the clumsiness of their con-

¹ Im Granatfeuer der Schlachtfelder, by G. Gellert (Jugendhort, Berlin).

struction and the preposterous statements with which they teem. One almost delightfully stupid one is entitled 'Tommy's Tagebuch,' and pretends to be the translation of a British soldier's diary, of the finding of which ("a thick leather-bound volume"—so likely that he would carry it in his haversack!) a harrowing tale is told. Our hero's daily statements, which begin several years before the war, deal with his enlistment and barrack life, the writer most evidently never having been inside a British barracks in his life. As the material for description is necessarily rather scanty, it is eked out with pious remarks on the strength of British beer and repentance for perpetually recurring "drunks." His voyage to India and experiences there are wisely only mentioned—not described. And his return to the colours after discharge is full of imaginative touches, which do credit to the writer—of being served out with aluminium (*sic*) bullets, the points of which he is instructed how to cut off; of regular regiments, all of three battalions each (like the German ones), &c.; and amongst other flights "Tommy" is made to express his deep appreciation of German nobility and courage, and to hope that Teutonic Kultur will overflow the world!

Verily it would appear inconceivable that the German powers-that-be should fling such unutterable bosh at their compatriots, but the depth of

contempt for their readers is not yet reached by this precious production. For the *same* man (one W. Norbert) is told off, with the same publisher (one Vita of Charlottenburg), to write a similar imaginary diary of a socialistically-inclined Frenchman (Alsatian) of the name of Passionel. Here the treatment is slightly different, being reflections on the errors that are brought about by Social Democracy, leading to the conviction that a despotic autocracy is the best mode of government for any country, including France. The book is hopelessly un-French all through, both in sentiment and in style, the heavy hoof of the Teuton being imprinted on every page. It finishes with the death of Passionel, whose last breath is devoted to a blessing on Germany and her noble aims, and a prayer that she may be victorious!

Leaving this sort of hog-wash to be eagerly swallowed by those for whom it is intended, we might now glance at the rather better class of books intended for neutral consumption.

A few of them are written by real neutrals; but it need hardly be said that only those neutrals who express strong pro-German feelings have their books translated and published in Germany—of course by authority, for there is a great rush to distribute favourable remarks of any kind by neutrals. Of these we might mention Colonel Müller and Major Tanner of the Swiss army,

another book by the fatuous Sven Hedin,¹ and a more sensible one by his compatriot, Dr K. Hildebrand of the Swedish Parliament, who shows earnest endeavour to get at the truth, but is, of course, like the others, entirely dependent on the information of his German guides.

Much effort is directed by the Germans towards influencing the Spanish-speaking world—not only in Spain, but Cuba and South America as well. One large book in Spanish is openly published by a German office in Barcelona; whilst in Havana all the anti-Ally ravings of a local newspaper have been collected and republished at a ridiculously low price (over 600 pages for a peso). Chile does not come much to the fore, but there is strong evidence of pro-German propaganda in some volumes published in the Argentine and other parts of South America. Throughout these Spanish books the burden is always the same—the wonderful might of Germany and its noble army, and its humane efforts in the cause of civilisation, the despicable character of the Allies, and especially of England, &c., and more particularly the brutal way in which Great Britain has always denied to other nations the “freedom of the seas.” This incomprehensible catchword, by the way, appears *ad nauseam* in very

many of the books under review, and causes one to rack one’s brains as to what it is that is really meant. Even granting that Britannia does, metaphorically, “rule the waves,” in what way has she ever prevented any other nation (in peace time) from making full use of these desirable elements? Has not the German merchant marine been ever and ever growing, and ever absorbing more and more of the commerce of the world? Is it not free to steam in any direction it pleases? And is not Great Britain the only nation that favours Free Trade and the policy of the Open Door—often at her own expense? What more *can* Germany want? Yet ever more the German parrot-cry goes up in senseless clamour to the heavens—“We *must* have the freedom of the seas!” “It’s just pure foolishness,” as the Scotsman said, and there we must leave it.

The few Dutch books that I have come across appeal to a lower stratum—vulgar remarks and vulgar caricatures; whilst the French translations are evidently intended for distribution in Switzerland, and the English ones for the United States; but I have seen few of these, and they call for little remark, whilst the only Turkish book within my ken is a semi-military one. I do not doubt that the propaganda have as well been

¹ His first book, which created such merriment in England, is, in spite of its size, published in Germany for a shilling.

spread in Russian,¹ Bulgarian, and other Slav languages; but I have not personally come across any such books, so cannot say. In any case, enough has been said to show the tireless industry with which the Germans are trying to spread their cause in neutral and other countries.

One healthful augury of the times is that the stream of books, as the war goes on, seems to show signs of drying up. A vast mass of literature was let loose on the world in the autumn of 1914 and during the whole of 1915. In 1916, judging from those I have seen, only about two books were published to every five in 1915. Perhaps the reason may be that, since the war has been largely transformed from a mobile war to one in the trenches, there is less to write about; perhaps the Press correspondents and other publicists have exhausted their abusive epithets; or perhaps paper and ink may, in consequence of the blockade, have risen to prohibitive prices. It is more likely, however, that a change has come over the spirit of the people, and that they are beginning to realise that the happy and glorious ending to the war about which they wrote so profusely, and the noble aims of their Fatherland concerning which they consumed so many pages of foolscap, are not likely to materialise in the way in which they expected; and that, with the

serious thoroughness of their race, they are now devoting themselves to organising the resources of their country instead of amusing themselves by the slinging of ink. Whatever the reason, it is, I fear, too much to hope that their present comparatively small output of literary effort is due to their having "written themselves out" altogether.

Comparisons are, of course, odious; but one cannot help contrasting the literature of which a sketch has been given above with the same type of literature issued in England since the beginning of the war. In some aspects the English books, taken as a whole, fall below the German ones; but in most cases the result is precisely the opposite.

The German books all present a terribly serious view of the War. Leaving out of account the more trashy and superficial records, a deep earnestness as to the meaning of the war, and a comprehension of the desperate issues involved, are revealed in almost every volume. Psychological studies of the German character, of the nation's spiritual preparedness, sermons and religious essays—prosy and long-winded if you like, but none the less very purposeful and earnest—abound; and in them all is expressed a sober and, so to speak, a driving faith in the ultimate issue which is most impressive. Appeals to patriotism, and to loyalty to sove-

¹ Greedy eyes are fixed on possibilities in Little Russia, so the seed has assuredly been sown there as well.

reign and all authority, find infinitely greater expression in the German books than in the British; and the willingness to subordinate self to the general good of the nation beams from every page.

But, on the other hand, these self-same pages are blackened by a spirit of hatred of the enemy and appeals to the lower feelings for which we look in vain in the English books. The latter deal with the war in a gallant, high-spirited way for the most part, —never a word of hatred for the enemy, hardly even of dislike,—more often of chaff, as for an adversary incapable of appreciating anything but the more serious side of war, but at the same time thoroughly worthy of one's steel. The lying slanders and efforts to do harm to the enemy by spreading falsehoods about him, which are so conspicuous in the German books, are entirely absent in the British ones; and where, in the latter, it becomes necessary to refer to low dealings on

the part of the enemy, chapter and verse are given, with an obvious effort to arrive at the truth and to make allowances where possible.

What, in conclusion, most clearly distinguishes the two literatures is, in my opinion, the spirit of fair-mindedness and cheerfulness in the British volumes as compared with the spirit of desperate determination and hate in the German ones. The harm, in fact, that has been and is being done by the dissemination of these latter books, sowing discord and hatred for future generations, is incalculable. For years and years to come the Germans will believe the falsehoods and lopsided theories and incorrect facts that teem in this literature; and, after all, as these books are all issued with official sanction, who is to blame them?

In very truth, the Censor and his Higher Authorities have a heavy responsibility to bear.

G.

THE FIRST WEEK OF THE FIRST GREAT PUSH.

FROM A HOSPITAL BEHIND THE FRENCH FRONT.

JULY 1st, 1916! This is one of the half-dozen dates that will be branded for ever on the memories of every man and woman throughout France and Greater Britain. The first day of the Great Push—the first day, let us emend it, of the first great push. Before the vivid picture of it is blurred in my mind by the memory of a still greater day that is yet to be, let me try to put down in writing what the first week of July 1916 meant to a hospital served by British people for the wounded French soldiers of the Somme Army. The wounded men of France testify as much to their loyalty to our common ideal of civilisation, in the wards of a hospital, as do those who come through unscathed and stay on at the front to take part in the next great struggle.

On the first we waited, full of tense, suppressed excitement. The Great Push had begun—how were the Allies faring? Our hospital had been evacuated almost to the last man. Our new emergency ward of 80 beds had been created in what had once been as big as an English parish church: our theatre and our receiving rooms had been supplied with a huge reserve of bandages and swabs, of lint and gauze and wool; our new X-rays installation had been fitted up to the last connection; our am-

bulances were waiting, ready to start at a moment's notice, in the garage yard.

The incessant thunder and boom of the great guns had never been silent for days. This day, at dawn, the thunder had swelled to an orgy of terrific sound that made the whole earth shiver; then, a few hours later, had ceased, and we could hear once more the isolated reports of individual cannon. Those of us who had been at the hospital through the attacks of June 1915, and the more serious push in Artois, beginning on September 25th, 1915, went early to bed. If the call came in the night, we could always be summoned—meanwhile, we slept when we could. The later comers marvelled at our lack—our apparent lack—of anticipation and excitement, and waited up long into the night. July 2nd dawned. The morning hours dragged on, placid in the hot sunshine of highsummer. Our ambulances were called out to await the first train of wounded at our clearing station. It was at noonday dinner that the telephone message came through that they were arriving shortly with bad cases. The ward Sisters and their staffs went over their arrangements once more; the women orderlies stoked up the hot-water marmites attached to each ward and to the operating theatre,

and the Sister who presided there counted over again her reserve drums of sterilised cloths and swabs. We, in our department, once more tried our tubes to make sure that they were regulated to a nicety, and the little group of women doctors collected by the window that opens above the entrance-hall and watched for the cars to come.

Absolute readiness — and then — speed without haste. That was what we had to aim at; on that must depend the chances of many a human life. The long blast of a whistle from the entrance-hall—how well we were to know it!—and almost to dread its insistent iteration during the next few days. This was the porter announcing the arrival of the first convoy from Cr——, sixteen stretcher cases. No sooner had the men been lifted out and carried to the various receiving rooms than the cars went back to the gare regulatrice for more. Trains were arriving from the Somme in one long stream. The drivers never ceased journeying backwards and forwards all that afternoon and all that night, and the three women and the man,¹ who drove our four ambulances, carried over a hundred cases during the first forty-eight hours of that nightless week. They slept a little by turns, so that during the first twenty days of the great push there were always some of our cars at the clearing

station, night or day, and the cases distributed to our hospital never had to wait there longer than was necessary.

Very soon the first cases were brought, already washed and prepared for operation, to the X-ray rooms. At first we worked the new installation only; then, as the men were brought up more quickly than we could deal with them, our Radiologist passed from one room to the other, making the examination herself, and leaving me to finish the photograph. Still we found we were not keeping up with the supply of fresh cases, and then she handed the smaller room, with the Butt installation, over to me, and herself worked the new Gaife installation, so that each case, as the stretcher was brought in and placed on the table, was examined at once, and we were able to deal with two at a time. The other assistant remained in the dark room, developing the plates.

Very soon the surgeon-in-chief was hard at work, with the anæsthetist and an assistant, in the operating theatre, each ward surgeon bringing up her own cases and assisting with them. It grew dark, and still the wounded came in. By ten o'clock we had a long line of stretchers lying in the corridor outside the X-ray rooms and the theatre,—at one end wounded men waiting to be examined by us; at the other, those who had already been examined and who were wait-

¹ Rejected three times for the Army before Conscription passed; now driving an ambulance on the Eastern Front with British Red Cross Society.

ing their turn for operation. The two storekeepers, and the kitchen orderlies, who had gone off duty, organised themselves into a stretcher squad, and kept the X-ray couches and the operating table supplied. Down another corridor the other assistant radiographer had ranged her developed plates to dry—dozens of them. Some time after midnight our doctor had to retire to bed. She was not a strong woman, and she had to be ready for the new day's work at 8 A.M. At four o'clock the other assistant, having developed sixty-three photographs since two o'clock in the afternoon, followed her. We knew the surgeons now had more cases ready for them than they could possibly operate on during the night. One or two of the ward surgeons dropped off, aware that they would have to begin work early in the morning. But the theatre went on, and the other surgeons who were waiting their turn to get their most urgent cases done, filled up the time by getting on with the list to be examined under the X-rays.

I went to bed when the theatre was closed for cleaning at 7 A.M. The surgeons went to bed too, with the theatre Sister and her staff of two women orderlies, leaving the rest of the cleaning to be done by the night-duty orderlies from some of the less busy wards.

At 11 o'clock I went back to the X-ray room to find that the doctor and the other

assistant had been hard at work since 8 A.M., and that the surgeon-in-chief had already made great headway with her ward visits, while all the ward surgeons were busy with dressings. I went to the dark room.

Cases continued to come in all day, but as every one was a stretcher case, and each car could only carry four, while the clearing station was 12 kilometres distant, the hospital was able to absorb them as they came in, so that there was little if any delay in attending to the poor fellows.

Their wounds were terrible. They were mostly men from the famous Colonial Division, or from such crack corps as the Chasseurs Alpins. They had broken the German line—but how they had suffered! Former cases treated in our hospital had been single wounds: many of these men were wounded—dangerously—in two, three, four, and five places. That great enemy of the surgeon who would conserve life and limb, gas gangrene, was already at work in 90 per cent of the cases. Hence the urgent need for immediate operation, often for immediate amputation. The surgeons did not stop to search for shrapnel and pieces of metal: their one aim was to open up and clean out the wounds, or to cut off the mortifying limb before the dread gangrene had tracked its way into the vital parts of the body. The stench of it was very bad. Most of the poor fellows were too far gone

to say much, but one and all bore their agony and the foulness of their terrible wounds with a bravery that must make every hospital worker know human beings to be, in some sort, divine. Those who cried out and moaned had passed beyond full consciousness and their own control. There was one boy—a lad of twenty-one—hopelessly injured, though the surgeons never admit the hopelessness of any man's case till death has proved it. He was hurt in so many places that it was difficult and slow work moving him into suitable positions for his radiographic examination. He helped us all he could, and when it was over, and his stretcher was being lifted off the table, he apologised in the neatest of phrases for giving us all so much trouble when we must be very tired. He died a few hours later.

After supper that second day I went to lie down for a couple of hours. Some time after I went back to the X-ray room our doctor knocked off, and the other assistant went off at two in the morning. A stream of cases kept coming up to be examined all night, but I got to bed at six. Two hours later, my room mate, who was the senior orderly in the theatre, came to bed. In the theatre they had been operating since noon the day before. That morning—July 4th—the doctor and the other assistant went on duty at eight, but I slept till nearly noon. After dinner the other assistant knocked off for a

bit, and I went on till supper-time. Then I rested till 10 P.M., and came back to take duty single-handed during the night, but was able to get to bed by 4 A.M. By this time the hospital was more than half full, and a night theatre staff had been organised which relieved the day staff at 9 P.M. Each shift worked for twelve hours on end. But the surgeons could devise no system of shifts. Even when they got four or five hours in bed by a stroke of luck, they were constantly being called up to serious cases and to emergency operations. With such a high percentage of gas gangrene in the wounds, and with the men in such a state of exhaustion after hard fighting, cases were liable to take a turn for the worse at any moment, and further incisions, and often amputation, had to be resorted to in order to save the men's lives. By this time a second operating theatre had been improvised in the annexe of a small ward, and the junior surgeons dealt with the smaller operations here to relieve the pressure on the regular theatre.

The wards were an unforgettable sight. Light dressings and gallows splints were the order of the day. Morning dressings were no sooner over than evening dressings had to begin. Stretchers were constantly coming and going from the receiving room, the theatre, the X-ray rooms. It must have been heart-breaking to nurses accustomed to the clockwork round and the neat rows of counterpaned beds in

civil hospitals at home. To the girls who were serving as ward orderlies—and during this period of stress often had to play the part of staff nurses—it must have been a long drawn-out period of dreadful strain and physical fatigue. The day staffs would work on till nearly midnight to help the night staffs; and the night staffs, instead of going off duty at 9 A.M., would work on in the wards till dinner-time to help the day people. In the same way the kitchen staff, the laboratory orderly, the storekeepers, and Vestiare clerk, would wait up every night till long after midnight, working as a volunteer stretcher squad to carry the stretchers backwards and forwards between the wards and the operating theatre. When they went to bed, the cases were carried by the theatre Sister and her assistants; and if they were busy swabbing up a too slippery floor, the surgeons would carry them themselves. The ward orderlies were generally far too busy attending to bad cases in the wards to be able to spare time to carry their cases up to the theatre. Several of the poor fellows died; the only wonder was that they had lasted so long, wounded as they had been, after an exhausting struggle, and then sent on that long journey by ambulance and train from the Somme rail-heads to our clearing station. Many of them came from the Division Marocain,—not that first famous Division which

protected the rear of the French Army in its retreat from Belgium—it had been annihilated—but the Division which cleared out the German first-line trenches in the Somme advance—cleared them, treading on the skirts of the wonderful French barrage, with long keen knives, that the picked French infantry might follow and hold them and use them as an attacking trench for their assault on the second and third lines. These poor black fellows from Senegal, and the Arabs from Tunis and Algeria, were very severely wounded: men with less iron constitutions must have died where they fell of such wounds. Yet the agony of their wounds was as nothing to the terror of their minds when they realised that a visit to the operating theatre often meant the loss of a mangled and gangrenous limb. They spoke only a few words of pigeon French, and the horrible legend spread among them that the first visit to the theatre meant incisions—mere senseless slashes of the surgeon's knife, to their unsophisticated intelligences; the second, amputation; and the third, the slitting of their throats. It was days ere their terror subsided, and weeks before their suspicious fear of the white women with sharp knives and wicked-looking forceps gave place to the dog-like devotion and gratitude that characterised their attitude to surgeons, nurses, and orderlies eventually.

One broad-nosed, woolly-headed giant, black as ebony, awakened from the anaesthetic (which drugged these coloured men much less deeply than their white comrades) on the operating table; he looked round in abject fear, though the instruments were all in the tray and the orderly had almost finished bandaging him; then his eyes lighted on the chief surgeon (divested of her gloves and gauze mask), who, as it happened, had dressed him in the ward and evidently gained his confidence. A black arm shot out towards her as she made towards the door, and clutched her hand, which he grasped and laid against his cheek, closing his eyes contentedly once more as he murmured, "*Moi connais toi.*" Another, whose arm had just been amputated, and who, inconveniently coming round as he was being borne on the stretcher back to his ward, suddenly leapt from it and made as if to bolt. The head surgeon came out of the theatre, when he immediately calmed down, and, letting her take his remaining arm, walked docilely—and quite capably—upstairs and back to his bed.

Of actual physical suffering from their injuries they had no fear. Never have I seen such pluck as was shown by these native soldiers of France on our X-ray table. They never let a sound escape them, and they made every effort to do as they were bid when asked to move injured limbs or to assume difficult and

painful positions. Once or twice I have known them ask if the rays were going to burn them—not in fear, but merely in order to know what they had to face. One little fellow of twenty-one, with a face like a child's goliwog, had enough shrapnel in him to kill three white men. His arm—both bones shattered beyond repair, and so full of metal that it would have been impossible to put a sixpenny-bit on any clear part of the X-ray photograph of it and not have covered a piece of shell—was amputated; but his thigh, from knee to buttock, equally full of bits of metal, was left, since the buttock itself had been literally torn away. Yet five months later this black boy was tearing about the hospital park like a young deer, full of the wildest spirits, and reconciled, apparently, to his one-armed condition and his uneven gait by the fact that his French comrades regarded him as quite a little hero, and that he was to receive the *Croix de Guerre*.

They were not all like that. One, badly wounded, and maimed for ever, would piteously ask "*Why? Why?*" His country was at peace, his village had not declared war, and his tribe had scarcely heard the name of France's enemy. Then why had they to fight and die with the French? None of them, I believe, understood that they belonged to an empire, and that their lives were being sacrificed for the security of their own homes no less than

for those of their French comrades. They were fighting for the French, and they were proud of their prowess in the great war, and—most of them—they accepted death or maiming as part of the inevitable price of a great battle. For the rest, they liked their French comrades well enough, would follow their officers anywhere, were extraordinarily grateful patients, and were frankly savages in their dealings with the enemy. On the heads of that race be it that in pressing France so hardly they have forced her, in defence of her existence and the existence of her colonies, to range the native peoples under her protectorate against another white nation.

The Arabs were very different patients: highly strung, nervous, complaining of their sufferings, they nevertheless bore them bravely enough when they became almost more than human nature could support. Their mental pain must have been acute when the strange foreign women, rather than allow them to die in possession of their shattered limbs, took them off, and thereby closed for ever the gates of Paradise against them should they succumb after all. If they recovered, the loss of a limb troubled them little; but when they came face to face with death, it must have been bitter for the orthodox to face eternal banishment from Paradise as well. There was one little Tunisian who lost his arm, a mere lad: he was proud

beyond belief of his two years of campaigning, and his devotion and gratitude to the foreign women who had looked after him was touching. There was nothing he would not do for any of them, and his one arm did more service to his sense of gratitude than many a European patient's two hands.

And yet, when I look back on it, it is the courage of the French soldier that I remember most poignantly. There was one who was brought to my table with both shoulders horribly injured, and the wound in one already gangrenous. It was exquisite torture for him to be moved, lying, as he was, on his wounds: yet it would have hurt him impossibly to turn him over on to his face. I examined him under the rays, and found the clavicle on the right side broken, and five large pieces of shrapnel lodged in his shoulder. Then I found three pieces on the other side. I sent a message to his ward surgeon to ask what she wished done, and she asked that the larger pieces might be localised and both shoulders photographed. The poor fellow had to be shifted for each photograph. Then, after a rough calculation, it appeared that the pieces lay nearer the surface of his back than of his chest, but he could not be turned over for more accurate measurements to be made. So his ward surgeon, with our own radiologist, who left another case to come and see him, both came and looked at his injuries through the

fluorescent screen, saw for themselves in what difficult positions the pieces of shell had lodged, and decided that the only means of getting the necessary information as to precise depth and situation was to have stereoscopic photographs. I was left to carry out their instructions. Before that man was taken away he had had two direct ray photographs taken, stereos of both shoulders (*i.e.*, two photographs of each shoulder), and two or three localisations, and he had been lying there an hour on the hard table, suffering dreadfully. Yet he never uttered a word of protest or complaint, and murmured something cheery when we parted. A long wait, and then he was carried to the theatre to have the gangrenous wounds cleaned up. To endure all that after hours of tense waiting for the attack, more strenuous hours of fighting, and the noisy hell of a modern bombardment; then those two shattering wounds, and the long wait, under fire, for succour; and after that the painful journey to the dressing station, and then the long journey by ambulance train and motor! He has the *Médaille Militaire* now, and is doing well——

But I have wandered from the first week of July. I worked through that day without pause after my four hours of real night sleep, and knocked off at about 11 P.M., leaving the other assistant single-handed to finish the night work. I had not been asleep an hour when there was a rap

on the door, and an orderly called to me to come down at once, as a new convoy had come in and some of the cases needed immediate operation. I was wanted to develop the plates while the other assistant went on with the examinations. I do not think I have ever felt so sleepy and tired as I did when I got downstairs—it is so much easier to carry on than to be called up, when you are nearing the end of your powers of keeping awake. We worked as in a dream. My legs and hands did not seem to belong to me, and I heard my own voice far away as if it came from somebody else. It had become impossible to work quickly, and I found it necessary to make great efforts to remember little things and to do them correctly. We got to bed again before the dawn.

On the last day of the week our X-ray staff had an addition, the chief assistant having come back hastily from leave in England. Thenceforward we were able to tackle the work comfortably, each getting some time off during the day, and dividing the night work amongst us in shifts of two. Further, since the hospital was almost full, we could not be rushed by any great influx of serious cases. We settled down to steady hard work that continued through the rest of July, August, and September, varied once or twice by emergencies, such as when we admitted 80 cases in one day (after having evacuated a goodly number to make

room for them), and before nightfall had examined 40 of them under the rays and operated on 20. If the little village churchyard saw more soldiers buried there during those three months of the summer of 1916 than during all the previous twenty months of our hospital's existence, we know that not one was lost because our organisation was stretched and strained beyond breaking-point. Each case got the best and most prompt attention possible. The auxiliary services behind the lines did not fail the men who risked and gave all during the fierce fighting of the first great Push. What they faced in the fighting their comrades and themselves alone know. What they faced in suffering afterwards, and how they faced it, we, working in sheltered security far in the rear, know well. Honour to them all—honour and green remembrance.

When they were first brought in, the men, as a rule, were too exhausted and ill to talk, but there were exceptions. Some Frenchmen are all that popular imagination has pictured them—nervous, excitable, dramatic; though, indeed, it would astonish many English people could they see the product of the new two-year-old *esprit des tranchées*—a quiet, sober man with a dogged tenacity and fatalistic courage that can and does endure and hold on to the bitter end, be it defeat or victory. This grim endurance follows the French soldier down into the valley of the shadow of death and beyond; it is still

there, his inalienable possession when he comes up on the other side, alive, but grievously wounded. There is great inspiration in it to others whose courage is not of so high an order. Thus these tortured and broken men are silent mostly, intent on bearing their pain dumbly, and on giving those who tend them as little trouble as might be.

Yet I have known others in whom the fire of excitement and enthusiasm still burned when they were brought to us, twelve, fifteen, or twenty hours after they were wounded. These men, that July, were strangely exultant. The French Army and the French soldier had been vindicated. They had broken the German line. They had always believed that France would conquer—some day; that the invaders would be driven off her sacred soil: now they knew it, had themselves had a hand in the demonstration of it. Some of them, well educated men from the crack regiments, were strongly moved. British patriotism is a social thing, a matter of race and institutions and traditions. There is a mystical feeling for the very soil of the land about the French devotion to *La Patrie*. This pressing back of the hereditary foe from invaded France had touched these thoughtful men in their deepest emotions. I had always known that the French Army would not listen to any talk of a premature and ignoble peace, though individual French soldiers loathe the war

more than any Britisher can conceive. Now, hearing these men talk of Verdun, where their very bodies had formed the bulwarks of Paris all winter, and of the Somme, where they had once more resumed a triumphant initiative and beaten the enemy from his deepest strongholds, I was more confident than ever that no German peace-craft could make these citizen soldiers relax their efforts till they were assured that the France of their children, and their children's children, would be secure from invasion for ever.

There was another type too, the dare-devil Colonial, the professional *militaire*, the veteran of five years' service in these regiments, whose rough material is often the discharged prisoner, and whose pride it is that as soldiers they have no superior in Europe. They came to us hot from the storming of the villages, a crowd of desperadoes, to a hospital staffed exclusively by women, and foreigners, if Allies, at that. They were proud, too, of what the Blue Coats had done. It reminded me of the poem of my childhood, where the victorious boy soldier, in answer to Napoleon's query as to whether he were wounded, replies: "Nay, I'm killed, sire," and dies. They gloried in the achievements of the Colonial Division, but they spoke of it in the past tense. "We have won—but we exist no more—our company—our battalion—our regiment—is dead."

What devils they were, too! Wild, valiant men, lawless, cynical about their own patriotism, yet bearing the strongest testimony to it in that *esprit de corps* which would never allow their regiment to be beaten, and permitted the High Command to rely absolutely on their *élan* and determination when a difficult piece of ground had to be won or a specially strong village to be stormed. They fear nothing, these men, least of all, death in battle. And if, when wounded, they do not miraculously turn into saints, who can blame them? Not those who live in sheltered security behind the lines. Moreover, some of them did change, most wonderfully, and some of them needed not to change at all. With them had fought some battalions of the Foreign Legion. These men, too, doubtless had each his past. Yet they were gentlemen all, from whatever land they hailed. Most of them who came to our hospital had fought for France from motives of chivalry. Several of them were no longer young, and some of them were maimed for ever. They accepted their destiny like men. It was the fortune of war. That thought—it is the fortune of war—carries one far; but when it brings you up short beside the bedside of a strong, simple country lad of twenty—hopelessly crippled, blinded, bereft of manhood, or dying in great pain, when by all the laws of nature his life should be before him and his adventures just

beginning—then it fails, and once more the hideousness, the cruelty, and the senseless waste-fulness of war stands stark before you. How they hate it too, these strong boys! And still, if one talks with them, how they all come back to the same sheet-anchor of resolution: they are consciously fighting and suffering and dying, not only in defence of their native land, but of social sanity, freedom—in fine, of civilisation. It is the only thought that can bring comfort, not only to those who suffer and die, but to those bereaved ones who live on, and to those who have to watch the pain of both.

There is no militarism among these French soldiers. The *militaire* by trade, the dare-devil Colonials, are far from deifying their calling. Men of gold lace and *galons* they abhor. To them an officer is only a leader if he leads, and a master if his courage and war experience surpasses their own. If he is a tried and brave soldier, with a personality to win their allegiance, they will, as one of them expressed it to me, follow him to hell! But if he is a chocolate soldier—well, these Colonials speak their minds, themselves daring disciplinary punishment and death with cynical cheerfulness. There are few of them left, say the veterans: and of their original officers, men for whom they would have died, none. The Colonial Division has bought its glory at a high price. Its military traditions, and a veteran here

and there to tell of them, are all that is left of it. The new men who fill its ranks and wear its uniform have something to live up to.

As for the conscripts, those who are not fathers, fighting that their children may possess the land of France in security and peace, are sons heartily sick of warfare, and determined that never in their lifetime shall the enemy have excuse to force them to fight again. If any British people fear that France may be persuaded to a premature and inglorious peace, let them go among the French soldiers and their women-folk who have already given all, and who have not given it that the same sacrifice may be required of another generation in the years to come. The sons of the fathers of 1870 allowed themselves to be lulled into sleep and false security. The fathers of 1914 will not risk an awakening for their sons such as they themselves received two years ago. France will fight to a finish.

Rather is it in England, among those who do not yet understand that this is a war of civilisation against reaction, of a free Europe against a militarist tyranny, in which victory is more important to us personally than the life and ease of any one individual of us who have not yet suffered intimately as the French have suffered when all is said and done—rather is it among those whom you have to fear a movement for peace without honour, peace at any price

now that Germany may make war at her own price later on!

Perhaps I did not learn all this in the first week of July 1916—or rather it was there written plain enough in that hospital full of wounded French soldiers—but it was brought home to me during the summer and autumn months that followed, when the initial push had hardened into steady, relentless, unyielding pressure. The first week of the First Great Push!—perhaps before this appears in print we may be in the thick of the first week of the Final Great Pressure. If it serves to bring home to any British reader a little more forcibly what the French are fighting for, and how they are fighting in the Final Great Push, it will have

been worth while setting down my impressions of July 1916, gleaned among the men who had fought and fallen in that epic of effort and suffering which we call the Battle of the Somme. It is our British soldiers who hold that ground now. When the time comes for them to advance from the positions won last year by the French, perhaps they will see, with the mind's eye, as many a French soldier vows he has seen with his bodily vision, regiment after regiment of ghostly blue-clad men, with burning eyes and bayonets fixed, leaping out of the trenches and over the top beside them, comrades still, though they rest now for ever in the peace of death.

SKIA.

THE OTHER MASTER.

BY SIR HUGH CLIFFORD, K.C.M.G.

IT is a matter of close upon ten years ago since Walter Amherst died of blackwater fever at a God-forsaken outstation on the Gold Coast named Aumakru, or something like it. Amherst was, by rights, a medical officer,—not a political,—but in those days the Government was often hard up for men, and frequently set a doctor to do the work of a District Commissioner, as occasionally befalls even now in the distant Northern Territories. This, as any medical man will tell you, is “to cut blocks with a razor”; while if you are to believe the men in the political service, it is equivalent to putting a lap-dog in charge of a flock of rams. Amherst, however, happened to be one of those men who are cut out for administrative work among a primitive people. He was immensely energetic, abnormally keen, devouringly inquisitive, and possessed, moreover, the sort of personality that is calculated to impress itself upon the popular imagination. The district in his charge consisted of some five hundred square miles of virgin forest, situated at a distance of five days’ hard march from the coast, and his big lean figure speedily became a familiar sight to the inhabitants of every mud village within his jurisdiction. He never used a hammock—

and indeed in that hilly jungle country ten years ago there were few places where a hammock could be used,—and his pedestrian powers were extraordinary. He was ubiquitous, and was constantly turning up where he was least expected, to the intense discomfort of the local Chiefs and Headmen, who naturally liked to have timely warning of the coming of the District Commissioner, in order that all things calculated to offend the susceptibilities of a white man might be decently removed in anticipation of his visit. Even the most elaborate system of “drumming” failed to advertise his movements, for he never seemed to travel in the direction which was to be anticipated, and the manner in which he was for ever dropping from the skies into some wholly unprepared locality, reduced the local authorities, whose business it was to let him see just as much as, but no more than, was good for him, to a condition bordering upon a state of nervous exhaustion.

The effect of this was all the more depressing, because the Aumakru district was in those days one of the most fetish-ridden places in the whole of the colony. This meant, of course, that there was much to be hidden which it became increasingly impossible to hide

for Amherst very speedily acquainted himself not only with the geography of his difficult district, but with the manners and customs of its inhabitants, many of which were of a highly objectionable description. He was not long in discovering that one particular fetish, an object of universal terrified veneration throughout the villages, was of a peculiarly undesirable character, and as it had been proclaimed as unlawful throughout the colony, he set to work ruthlessly to extirpate it. How he effected this does not concern us now. The bogey, it must be remembered, was an object of terror rather than of adoration to the rank and file of the native population, by whom Amherst, who laughed at its powers and blew up its shrines whenever he lighted upon them, was regarded as a deliverer—much as St George might have been looked upon by the people whom the dragon had been accustomed to hunt for his daily meal. The opposition came of course from the fetish priests, the people who not only preached the gospel of the bogey, but made it their business to live by it. Their position, however, was both delicate and difficult. If they declared themselves the servants of a proclaimed fetish, they rendered themselves liable to prosecution, fine, imprisonment, and all manner of well-organised discomforts; while if they contented themselves with whispering that the fetish would presently punish his enemies, the people pointed

derisively to the charred ruins of his shrines and to the rude health of their vigorous District Commissioner. The West African, like the rest of the world, likes to find himself upon the winning side, and in his warfare with the fetish Amherst was obviously proving victorious.

He himself, however, was under no illusions with regard to the hatred he was exciting or as to his personal safety. He knew a good deal about his enemy the fetish by this time, and more than a little of the methods of its priests. He knew that certain fetishes *are* destructively vindictive, and that the priests are the active instruments of destruction. As a medical man, he had made curious investigations into some of the means of vengeance which this particular bogey was in the habit of employing, and there is extant an interesting memorandum in his handwriting in which he lays stress upon the fact that one of the poisons in use causes death accompanied by symptoms that are indistinguishable from those which are typical of black-water fever. It was within three months of the time when this memorandum was written that Walter Amherst died at Aumakru of the last-named disease.

In West Africa, where there has been so much debate about health questions that the average man begins to feel ill before Dakar is sighted, much as the bad sailor is attacked by qualms while still many

miles from the port of embarkation, the one unforgivable sin in the eyes of the home authorities is for any one to die in the bush without the personal superintendence and assistance of a duly qualified medical man. Thus it befalls that in this section of the British Empire alone you will not infrequently find, in outlying parts of the country, a bored, discontented, and unoccupied doctor eyeing with increasing disfavour his one potential patient, the local District Commissioner, often enough a robustly healthy young Englishman who never has the grace to have so much as a finger-ache. Even in places where things medical are not conducted quite upon this approved but rather expensive scale, it rarely happens that a doctor is not more or less within hail, and on the third day after Amherst fell ill one of his *confrères* was by his bedside. Another white man, an Inspector of Schools, who happened to be touring through an adjoining district, also got wind of Amherst's illness, and hurried to the spot in time to see him die. A *post-mortem* was duly held, and death from blackwater fever was entered in the certificate. The surviving doctor was quite sure of his diagnosis; but Amherst to the end stoutly maintained that, though the symptoms were undeniably those which are associated with the disease, he was the victim of poison concocted by the local fetish priests. The surviving doctor,

of course, had the advantage of the last word, and I understand that his arguments were regarded by his fellow-professionals as abundantly convincing. When all is said and done, however, it was at best no more than one medical man's opinion against that of another.

Walter Amherst had done so much to reduce the lawless Aumakru district to order that the Government was anxious to consolidate and perpetuate his work. They therefore lost no time in hurrying a successor to the vacant station.

The man upon whom their choice fell was Frank Bainbridge, an Assistant District Commissioner, who was beginning his second tour on the Coast. He was a youngster of three or four and twenty, without previous experience of the bush; and with the unconquerably sanguine temperament proper to his youth and race, he regarded this appointment as a heaven-sent chance of renown and distinction. It is a fine thing to be in the early twenties and to find oneself in sole charge of a big isolated district. It means a measure of independence; it is an escape from tutelage; it promises a first sup of those intoxicating drinks — personal power and responsibility — which, if they be tasted while a man is young, presently become as essential to his comfort and wellbeing as are the daily doses of his drug to the confirmed morphia-maniac.

It may be that some of the

edge was taken off young Bainbridge's enthusiasm by the tramp up-country. The Aumakru district is not only jungle-smothered—which means that you can never see more than a dozen yards or so in any direction, so impeded is your vision by the walls of tree-trunks and the tangle of underwood—but it is also mercilessly hilly. The only means of progress through this wilderness was supplied by native footpaths—locally called "Chief's roads." (In West Africa we have a passion for calling all things by grandiose names—an inheritance, probably, bequeathed to us by the drink-inflamed imaginations of bygone generations of Old Coasters.) These paths, of course, invariably lead straight up the side of every hill they encounter, and, the summit reached, plunge down into the valley on the other side. This, all the world over, is the nature of tracks trodden out for themselves by populations which are accustomed to go barefoot. If you will give the matter a moment's thought, you will see why this must inevitably be the case. A native path is always narrow—wide enough to allow of men walking along it in single file, until such time as white men begin to interfere with it. Such a track, contoured round the side of a hill, would be worn to a mere knife's edge by a single rainy season, and any bare-shod native walking along it would be forced to tread on the sides of his feet. This, as any one who has tried it knows, is most painful for a man who

goes barefoot. By comparison, the strain on the back sinews and the bursting of one's lungs which is caused by climbing an endless succession of steep ascents is felt to be as nothing. Not, however, by Frank Bainbridge, who cursed each steep climb passionately, but in the silence enforced by his gasping breath, and found the descents almost as tiring.

In the fulness of time the journey came to an end, and Frank found himself standing in his drenched bush-shirt, and khaki shorts discoloured by sweat, replying to the complimentary welcome of a gorgeously arrayed native Chief—the Omanhene of Aumakru—who, surrounded by his elders, courtiers, and symbol-bearers, was awaiting him under the shade of an enormous parti-coloured umbrella. This group was ranged in a horse-shoe, with the Chief sitting on his stool in the centre, with sub-chiefs, linguists, and elders grouped behind and on either side of him, and with men and children holding all manner of gilt emblem-sticks, elephant-tails, &c., in their hands, squatting to form the segment of a circle to right and left. A background was supplied by the house which Frank Bainbridge was presently to inhabit—a long mud building, heavily thatched, with a dark interior and a wide, shady verandah, the whole raised some feet above ground-level on a smooth platform of beaten red earth. In a new clearing, some fifty yards to the right of the bungalow, a white cross marked

the last resting-place of poor Walter Amherst.

The interview with the Chief was short and formal. Bainbridge thanked him for coming to meet him; said that they would discuss business on the morrow; and excused himself on the grounds of his fatigue after his long tramp. The Chief was civil and courtly, and as Bainbridge entered his bungalow, proceeded down the hill in the direction of the native town, while his umbrella-bearer caused the huge, many-coloured sunshade to twirl and revolve giddily, and all the people set up an old-world chant to the accompaniment of much drumming and the firing of innumerable blank cartridges.

Frank lost no time in having a tub and changing into his pyjamas, the hems of which he stuffed into a pair of high mosquito-boots. Then he examined his new abode, which consisted of three rooms of spacious dimensions, set side by side, and the wide verandah above-mentioned. The servants' quarters and the cook-house were situated behind the bungalow. The room on the right he selected as his bedroom—it was not the room in which poor Amherst had died. The central room was furnished with a solid square table, and a door at the back led directly out to the servants' quarters. This, of course, was the "chop" or dining-room. The room on the left was vacant. It was here that the doctor and the inspector of schools had tended

poor Amherst, and it now stood ready for the use of any chance guest. The real living-place, of course, was the wide verandah, which was well shaded by the overhanging thatch, and was furnished with three or four lounge-chairs and a capacious writing-table.

Frank carried his despatch-box out on to the verandah, unpacked his writing materials, and, having been duly supplied by his servant Adu—who with his cook and his police orderly had come up with him from the Coast—with a long glass of bottled beer—not the first that he had consumed since his arrival—set to work to write up his official journal.

The afternoon was already far advanced, and the jungle around the bungalow was beginning to become vocal; but above the clamour of the cicadae and the evening pipe of birds, the strident blowing of elephant horns and the throb of drums from the native town made themselves heard, punctuated by the occasional clink of crockery from behind the bungalow.

As the darkness increased, Adu came into the verandah bearing a lighted kerosene lamp in his hand. Bainbridge was engrossed in his work, and did not look up from his writing. He subconsciously noticed, however, that Adu was standing about behind him in a hesitating sort of way, instead of placing the lamp on its obvious resting-place—the left-hand corner of

the writing-table. Bainbridge spoke with some irritation—

"What the devil are you doing?" he exclaimed. "Put the lamp down on the table, and don't stand goggling there!"

And Adu, after again shuffling about uneasily for a second or two, somewhat sulkily complied.

Bainbridge went on with his work, and wrote steadily until the hands of his wrist-watch pointed to the hour of seven. Then he raised his voice in a howl, calculated to make itself heard in the servants' quarters.

"Pass chop!" he shouted.

(In West Africa, where very few white men ever acquire a working knowledge of the vernacular languages, we are at considerable pains to perpetuate the use of a dozen or so tags of broken English which have survived from the old, inarticulate trading days. This we do in no curious antiquarian spirit, but purely for the moral satisfaction which we derive from the conviction, which comes to us after a few weeks' residence on the Coast, that we have mastered a foreign tongue with incredible thoroughness and rapidity, and that each of us has earned the right to pose for all time as a linguist of no mean order. If you want to hear English spoken in its pristine purity by natives of West Africa, you have to leave the British Colonies, and to travel east and south to the erstwhile German Kamaruns, where, of course, the universal use of

our language by the indigenous population was a hateful and offensive thing in the eyes of those who, until recently, were their masters. Accordingly, Frank Bainbridge cried "Pass chop!" when he meant *Serve dinner*, although the latter phrase would have been just as intelligible to the people he was addressing. He belonged to an instinctively conservative race, and one, moreover, which is possessed by a positive passion for self-deception.)

A few minutes later Adu appeared in the doorway which led from the dining-room into the verandah, and announced that dinner was ready, and Bainbridge rose from his chair, stretched his limbs, cramped by long sitting, and strolled into the adjoining room. The dinner-table was laid for two.

"What's this for?" he inquired sharply.

"Him for dat otter Master," said Adu.

"What do you mean? What other Master?"

"Him what lib for berandah, —stand close behind Master, watch Master write."

But Bainbridge knew that the nearest white man was at a place distant from him a tough three days' tramp.

That was the first uncomfortable incident, and Bainbridge was conscious of that sudden thrill of terror which a suspicion of the supernatural alone has the power to impart. Also, an instant realisation was

borne in upon him of the completeness, the immensity, of his loneliness, here in the heart of the West African bush, reigned over, for aught he knew, by Powers of Evil undreamed of by the white man. He sought the Englishman's usual refuge from fear, when that unwelcome emotion comes to him in the presence of a native audience,—swift loss of temper.

"Don't be a damned fool," he cried. "There isn't any other Master."

The West African native differs from, for instance, the Oriental in many things, but in none more strikingly than in his customary refusal to accept any white man's assertion of even the simplest fact without personal verification of its accuracy. [If you will ponder upon this fact, you will find therein a hint eloquent of the sharp contrast presented by the dealings which the peoples of West Africa and the populations of the East have had with Europeans since the closing years of the fifteenth century.]

For Adu, accordingly, to hear was in no sense to believe. He therefore walked coolly to the doorway and looked forth up and down the verandah. Then he turned to Bainbridge—

"He no lib now," he said, with a look of bewilderment.

"Of course he doesn't, you idiot," returned Bainbridge, now thoroughly angered. "There never was anybody there but me. Take that second place away."

Adu cast a reproachful glance at his master, and then began to carry out his order with obvious reluctance. He was clearly acting under protest. Your West African, moreover, is not an easy person to convince of error, and is possessed of a certain robust faith in himself which he never hesitates to assert. Therefore, while he removed the plate, napkin, and knives and forks, Adu growled a reiteration of his original statement.

"He gone 'way now," he muttered. "But him lib for dere all time Master write. I see him."

And from that position no invective of Bainbridge's had power to make him retreat.

His servant's demeanour fretted Bainbridge's nerves, and though he told himself, reassuringly, that the whole thing was "Rot," he found it difficult to take in the meaning of the words upon the page of the book which he had propped up in front of him to bear him company during his meal. For the life of him, too, he could not refrain from casting suspicious glances up and down the verandah, and into the dark corners of it where the big shadows lurked, when he passed out on to it from the chop-room, and lay down upon one of the long-chairs, with a reading-lamp at his elbow.

The evening was cool, though little breeze was stirring in that tree-protected spot. From the native town, at the foot of

the hill half a mile away, there ascended a confused murmurous sound of speech and droning song, and the restless throbbing of intermittent drumming. The humming chorus of innumerable nocturnal insects, woven into a web of blended sounds, was borne to him from the forest; and somewhere near at hand, hidden amid the topmost branches, a little tree-bear was perched, reiterating with a horrible insistence its loud and agonised outcry, which is suggestive of pain and despair made vocal. Again a realisation of the immensity of his solitude smote upon Frank Bainbridge's spirit with an appalling, paralysing force. He was possessed of the average healthy young Englishman's sublime confidence in his ability to deal without any particular difficulty with the large native population under his charge, and with any *natural* problems which their affairs might present for his solution. For the moment, however, this did not help him, for Adu's obvious sincerity and conviction had proved to be infectious. It was the uneasy suspicion that his solitude was perhaps shared with something or some one supernatural and invisible that made his heart stand still, and rendered his loneliness intolerable.

With a very conscious effort he got out of his long-chair, walked down the mud steps which led from the verandah to the cleared space in front of the bungalow, and went across to the spot where, be-

neath the white cross plainly visible in the moonlight, the mortal remains of Walter Amherst lay under a mound of newly disturbed earth. He stood there for a few minutes, and then, after glancing furtively over his shoulder to make sure that he was not observed, he knelt down, rather shamefacedly, and repeated the Lord's Prayer under his breath.

It occurred to him that he had not said a prayer kneeling since that last Sunday at home, when he had gone to church to please his mother, and had occupied a place in a pew by her side. It also struck him with a sort of shame that he was praying now *because he was afraid*,—that he was praying for or to Walter Amherst—he hardly knew which he was doing—in order to pacify his possibly restless spirit,—that he was, in his own fashion, being just as superstitious as the local natives, whose “funeral customs” are ceremonial drinking-bouts in which large quantities of ardent liquor are consumed by the pious and well-disposed, in order to stimulate their powers of lamentation and their imaginative praises of the deceased, who, while alive, was very likely known by his contemporaries to stand possessed of no single virtue, but who, being dead and dangerous, must now be placated at all costs. What was his repetition of the Lord's Prayer, he involuntarily asked himself, but a feeble and rather cowardly attempt to propitiate the manes of his departed predecessor?

And even his choice of a prayer—perhaps the only one that he knew by heart—appealed to him suddenly as strangely inappropriate to the situation. He was not worrying about his daily bread, or about being led into temptations,—the latter are few and far between for a man living alone in the West African bush if he be not consumed by a devouring thirst, and Bainbridge used his liquor sparingly. On the other hand, if he were the victim of “trespass” on the part of Walter Amherst, he was not, he felt, in the least inclined to forgive his persecutor, and would be but poorly compensated therefor by receiving absolution for his own transgressions. All these distracting thoughts crowded through his mind during the short space that he remained upon his knees, and he rose up feeling that his impulse had been foolish and his prayer a mockery. Then, almost involuntarily, he spoke aloud again,—spoke to the dead man whom he had never met in life—

“Play the game by me,” he exclaimed. “One white man, with another miles away in the bush. For God’s sake play the game!”

It was much the better prayer of the two, for he meant every word of it; but he had no faith in its efficacy, and it did not quiet his nerves. Alas, he felt keenly that he was making a fool of himself.

He went back to the little narrow circle of light on the verandah, around which great

bulking shadows appeared to hover, as though eager to overwhelm it, and resumed his seat and his book. A moment later he was startled by a loud cry from Adu—

“Yes, Master! I come, sar!”

This was followed by the appearance of his servant.

“Yes, sar? You call me?” said the latter interrogatively.

“No, I didn’t call you,” replied Bainbridge in surprise.

Adu took no notice, but turning away, again raised his voice, and repeated his former cry: “Yes, sar!” He then ran to the door which led from the verandah into the spare room, striking a match as he entered.

Bainbridge sprang up and followed him, and from the doorway saw him striking match after match, and heard him murmuring what sounded like a series of brief replies to as many inaudible orders.

“What the devil are you doing?” cried Bainbridge angrily. “Get to your quarters, and stop this humbug.”

“Me no hombug,” retorted Adu with no less warmth. “Dat otter Master . . .” But Bainbridge cut him short.

“Go to hell,” he cried. “Get out of this and go back to your quarters one time!” and the servant retired, murmuring sulkily.

That was the second incident, and it must be confessed that Frank Bainbridge did not find it attractive. To say that he was badly shaken

by it would not be to overstate the case, for how otherwise can it be accounted for that, for the first time since his arrival in West Africa, he was tempted to close all the shutters of his bedroom, and was seriously concerned to find that neither they nor the doors were capable of being securely fastened from within? Also, why should he have decided in his own mind that he would keep his stinking kerosene-oil lamp burning all night? To salve his own depressed self-respect, he tried to persuade himself that the exclusion of the night air was a wise precaution in this comparatively cool up-country station; but the profuse perspiration in which he presently found himself convicted him of cowardice, and convinced him of the necessity of ventilation and a through draught. He, none the less, had a half-hour's struggle with himself before he would subscribe to these patent truths, and could summon up the pluck—yes, that was the brutal fact—to throw doors and shutters wide again. Before he lay down once more, too, he changed the position of his camp-bed, so that the head of it rested against the mud wall, facing the door into the dining-room. Thus nothing could get *behind* him—he had become strangely apprehensive of an attack delivered from the rear,—but he could not keep an eye upon the windows which opened on to the forest, one on each side of him, any more than he

could simultaneously watch the door which gave on to the verandah, or the window opposite it, which looked out upon the servants' quarters. In fact, he was filled by a feeling of complete *insecurity*—a very comfortless bed-fellow.

Through the top of his mosquito net he could see the network of rafters overhead, along which at frequent intervals rats chased one another with much shrill squeakings. They led up and up into the dimness of hovering shadows. He could not keep his attention fixed upon the book he tried to read, for he was for ever peering and listening—at and for he knew not what. As the night advanced, the jungle without and the house itself gave forth innumerable weird sounds—those half-heard night-noises of the tropical bush which are individually so difficult to account for,—and to them, hour after hour, Frank Bainbridge lay listening with a quaking heart.

He was tired out, however, by his long tramp across those wicked Aumakru hills, and at last found himself fighting off sleep, as though it were a personal enemy; but when in the end it overcame him, it came freighted with fantastic terrors, from which he fled precipitately into wakefulness, to find himself lying on his cot sweating and gasping.

Frank Bainbridge awoke finally in broad daylight at

a much later hour than was his wont. Adu brought him his early tea, and prepared his canvas bath in silence; and when Frank had shaved and dressed, he went out on to the verandah feeling rested and refreshed, and prepared to do battle with all the follies and frailties of West African human nature, and with his own weakness of the night before, of which already he was feeling heartily ashamed.

It was a perfect forest morning, the radiant sunshine having already licked up the thick of the cotton-wool-like mist, which hangs so low and so heavy over the jungle during the first few hours after dawn. Little straying wisps of it were still visible above the tree-tops, filmy things against the pure blue of the sky. Dewdrops still glistened on the grass and on the leaves of the trees around the small clearing, in the midst of which the bungalow had been built; but the early songs of birds were beginning to die away into the silence that reigns in the tropical woodlands during the long, hot day.

Standing, leaning upon the rail of the verandah, and looking out upon the sunlit, dew-washed world, Bainbridge found it easy to deride the superstitious fears which had preyed upon him all night, and his own unaccountable access of pusillanimity. Broad daylight, when it comes after a stressful period of darkness,

clarifies the mental outlook no less surely than it resolves the threatening shadows before the physical sight, and endows familiar objects with their normal qualities of form and colour. Folk who are given to metaphysical speculations may at times be tempted to ask themselves which is the nearer approximation to reality—the haunting night-thoughts, which distort for us our world, and yet are so inexorable in their logic, so compellingly convincing, while darkness reigns, or the joy that cometh in the morning to renew our courage and restore our sanity;—but the average young English civil servant worries himself but little about such vain imaginings. Frank Bainbridge, therefore, merely told himself that he had been several kinds of an ass over-night, and resolved forthwith to put off the things of a child—the child who is afraid in the dark.

Accordingly, whistling an air from a musical comedy, which he had much frequented when last in England, he strolled along the verandah and entered the spare room. On the threshold he came to a halt, and simultaneously he ceased to whistle. Somebody had rigged poor Amherst's camp-bed, green mosquito net and all, though the latter was now looped up, and by the side of it stood a chair upon which had been placed a replica of the *chota hazari* which Frank had just consumed at his own bedside.

In response to Bainbridge's

angry call, Adu came running from the servants' quarters.

"Look here! What's the meaning of this?" his Master shouted at him, pointing to the tea-things.

"Dat for dat otter Master," Adu replied sulkily. "Him call me bring breakfast six o'clock."

"And was he here when you came?" asked Bainbridge derisively.

"Yes. Him lib for here. Him lie for bed," Adu replied, with all the doggedness of the West African, who is not lightly to be made to retract an assertion.

"Then, where has he gone? He's not here now."

"No. He no lib now. I think him go for bush."

"What was he like?" inquired Bainbridge.

"He like white man," said Adu. This was not enlightening.

"Was he old or young, dark or fair, eh?"

"Him not too old. Him all same like white man."

Bainbridge began to realise that his powers of description were not Adu's strong point, and that he was only wasting his time.

"Call the cook one time," he said; and passed out on to the verandah, where he sat down at his writing-table.

Presently the cook appeared.

Bainbridge asked him a few questions about supplies and domestic economies of one kind and another, with a view to putting him off his guard, and then inquired suddenly—

"You hear me call for tea this morning?"

"Yes, sar."

"Did you hear any one call for tea before that?"

"Yes, sar," was the no less prompt and no less calm reply.

"Who called?"

"Dat otter Master," stolidly answered the cook.

Bainbridge experienced once more the chill, uncanny thrill which had smitten him the night before. Again he sought refuge in wrath.

"You idiot!" he cried. "What do you mean? What other Master?"

"Me no know him name. Dat Master what lib for bungalow last night."

"Did you see him?" asked Bainbridge, and found himself trembling for the answer.

"No. Me lib for kitchen. Me no see him, but me hear him call 'Boy! Boy!'" replied the cook.

Kofi, the police orderly, when sent for, gave similar evidence. He, too, had heard the intruder call, both the night before and early that morning. He had also, he averred, seen a white man, dressed in the usual bush-kit affected by Englishmen in West Africa, walking down the hill, in the direction of the native town, an hour or two earlier. The white man was a stranger to him.

With all this testimony before him, Bainbridge found it impossible to cling to the theory that his people were all the victims of illusion.

There must, he thought, be some white man or other lurking about in the neighbourhood; but if this were so, the conduct of the Unknown was incredible and extraordinary. In the African bush all white men are brothers, and as such fraternise when they chance to meet. For one European to hide himself from another, while taking the liberty of making use of his bungalow and ordering his servants about, was an unthinkable proceeding. Also, how could any white man have come on to the verandah, and have stood looking over his, Bainbridge's, shoulder while he wrote, without being seen by him? And at the thought, in spite of the broad daylight, Frank found himself shuddering.

Bainbridge had sent word the night before that he would visit the Omanhene at nine o'clock that morning; but when he walked down to the town at the appointed hour, accompanied by his orderly, he was annoyed to find that no preparations for his reception had been made. The expected group, sitting and squatting and standing under the big palaver-tree in the centre of the village, was conspicuous by its absence; and even his interpreter was not awaiting him.

He inquired for the Chief's

house, walked up to it, and bade one of the crowd of loafers loitering near to tell the Omanhene that the D.C.¹ was there, and wished to see him "one time." A minute or two later his interpreter joined him, breathless with running, scrambling into a coat as he came.

"What's the meaning of this?" asked Bainbridge, who was now thoroughly angry at the indignities which were being put upon him. "Didn't you warn the Chief that I was coming?"

"Yes, sar. I did, sar," panted the interpreter.

"Well, why isn't he ready? And why weren't you ready?"

"I thought, sar, that you had decided to postpone the meeting," replied the interpreter in his very best English.

"What the devil did you think that for? Well, get hold of the Omanhene at once, now you *are* here."

A long string of men and children were now threading their way into the Chief's compound, and were streaming out of it again, bearing on their heads, with much clamour, a couple of European chairs and a number of the low, quaintly-shaped stools upon which, on the Gold Coast, persons of consideration are accustomed to sit. From up and down the street sub-chiefs and elders, followed by

¹ D.C. = District Commissioner. The abbreviation is in almost universal use among Europeans and natives alike on the Gold Coast.

their stool-bearers, were rapidly assembling; and in a few minutes a semicircular group had formed itself beneath the spreading branches of the palaver-tree, while all the male inhabitants of the place were gathering to act as audience.

West Africa is the home of democracy. The chiefs are elected by the popular voice from certain approved families, the descent being through the female line, and they are liable to "destoolment"—which means deposition—if they thereafter fail to come up to public expectation. Business discussions, moreover, have to be held in the presence and in the hearing of the people, so that all may see whether the chief comports himself with credit, and may have an opportunity of making sure that he states the popular case in a satisfactory manner, and does not give away the interests of the tribe. A modern chief on the Gold Coast, therefore, is eternally pulled in two directions—by the Government, which tries to make him force his people to clean their cocoa gardens, for instance, and by his fellow-tribesmen, who regard the curse of Adam as a hateful and unendurable burden. As a consequence, a chief, beset by the fear of destoolment on the one side, and by the inconsistency of the District Commissioner on the other, not infrequently has what is popularly called "an uncommonly thin time of it"; and there

may be something in the theory, current on the Coast, that a bad District Commissioner, when he dies, is born again as a Gold Coast Omanhene as a punishment for his iniquities.

Last of all the Chief himself appeared, surrounded by a rag-tag-and-bobtail of court criers, with their flat, gold-filleted cow-hide wigs, drum-bearers, with the human skulls on their instruments decently draped in white cotton cloth, and the usual crowd of emblem-carriers clustering around their monarch beneath the huge parti-coloured umbrella. A stool thickly covered with gold plates was borne by one of the attendants, and upon this the Omanhene presently took his seat after shaking hands with Bainbridge. In front of him the two European chairs had been placed. Upon one of these Frank seated himself. The other remained vacant.

"Ask the Omanhene why he was not ready to receive me?" he said to the interpreter.

A colloquy in the vernacular ensued between the Chief and the interpreter.

"He says," said the latter, turning to Bainbridge, "that the D.C. came here this morning, and so he did not think that you would come, sar."

"What does he mean?" asked Frank. "What D.C.?"

"Mr Amhurst, sar. The D.C., sar," was the startling reply.

"But you know perfectly well that Mr Amhurst is dead," cried Frank. "They buried

him there by the bungalow more than a fortnight ago."

"Him not too much dead, sar," said the interpreter, relapsing into more primitive English. "He come and he go all the time. He here just now, sar, when you sat down. He here this morning talking to the Omanhene."

He turned to the Chief for confirmation of this statement, and the courtiers spoke in a chorus of assent.

"It's nonsense," exclaimed Frank, struggling to reassure himself. "There wasn't any one. Here, take this chair away for God's sake!" And the offending article of furniture was promptly removed.

The rest of the interview is not worth reporting. Bainbridge tried valiantly to nail his thoughts to the trivial matters of business that called for discussion, but at every turn Amherst's personality obtruded itself. He had ordered this, he had arranged that, he had given instructions with regard to the other. When? Sometimes it was that morning, sometimes a day or two earlier: his death and burial seemed to have caused no break in the continuity of his administration, and his word evidently had for the natives a force that was *Medic*, and against it Bainbridge found himself powerless to prevail.

He returned to his bungalow, after a perfunctory inspection of the native town, a very badly shaken man. As he entered the verandah, he caught sight of a book lying open and

face downward upon a small table. He could not remember to have noticed it before, but, on the other hand, he could not swear that it had not been lying there ever since his arrival on the previous night. He took it up, and his eye fell upon a marked passage:—

"Thus was I . . .
Cut off even in the blossom of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled;
No reckoning made, but sent to my
account
With all my imperfections on my head.
O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!"

Surely a curious passage for any man to have marked; but the sweat broke out on Frank Bainbridge's forehead as he read it. To him it was the cry of a soul in torment,—an explanation of the inexplicable. It was as though Walter Amherst, whom he had never seen, was speaking to him with a voice from beyond the grave.

I am not going to attempt to dwell further upon Frank Bainbridge's experiences as D.C. of the Aumakru district. As things had begun, so they went on. The place was haunted by the wraith of a white man, plainly visible to the natives, consistently invisible to him,—a ghost at whose inaudible call men came running, for whose transport hammock-men paraded, for whom cooks prepared food which was never consumed, at whose unrecorded bidding chiefs and headmen did unexpected acts, and turned out their people for communal labour.

It must be remembered that we have only Frank Bainbridge's word for all this; that he never saw or heard anything in the least uncanny; and that he was only made aware of the hovering, ubiquitous Presence by the behaviour of the natives of all sorts and conditions, who seemed to accept the *revenant* as a perfectly normal phenomenon, and regarded it as an authority commanding obedience and respect, but apparently inspiring no excessive fear.

Also, it is on record that young Bainbridge, whose nerves had always been quite sound up to that time, was invalided home, suffering, the doctors said, from "acute neurasthenia," at the end of a fort-

night spent at Aumakru, and shortly afterwards elected to retire from the Service.

On the other hand, it should not be lost sight of that some West African fetishes are very powerful entities, and that their priests are people of resource. Moreover, one recalls a fragment of a certain catechism, not unknown on the Coast, which runs—

Q. What for did God make white man?

A. To make trouble for black man.

Q. What for did God make black man?

A. To hombug white man.

Personally, I advance no theory. Thirty odd years in the tropics have taught me a modicum of caution.

THE MYSTERY OF THE ANSE AU FOULON.¹

BY MAJOR-GENERAL R. MAHON, C.B., C.S.I.

IT is usual to regard the action fought before Quebec on the morning of the 13th September 1759 as one of the decisive battles of the British arms. The numbers engaged were small—the affair would hardly be called more than a skirmish in our days—but the fate of a Dominion was in the balance, and, we are accustomed to think, was decided on that September day. One critic at least has viewed the matter in a more correct perspective. The Hon. John Fortescue, in his wonderful narrative, 'A History of the British Army,' tells us that General Wolfe was slow to perceive the real weakness of the enemy's position. "The consequence was that the work was but half done, and . . . only narrowly escaped undoing."² That this is the true estimate of the result there is not a doubt.

The question we have to consider is what induced General Wolfe to hazard this "desperate cast," as Fortescue terms it, on the Heights of Abraham; to choose one of the most difficult landing-places within easy reach of overwhelming enemy forces, a place already garrisoned by

a detachment sufficient, had it acted vigorously, to delay the landing until the main body should arrive; to expose a small body of troops where it could be attacked on both flanks, and, by all the rules of war, annihilated before it could entrench or be supplied with munitions to carry out a defence; finally, even if success should result, to be morally certain that the French army could not be prevented from retiring on their base in the upper colony at Montreal, and there reorganising for another campaign, as actually happened?

The answer to this question involves discreditable evidence against certain individuals, but let me say at the outset that there is certainly none against Wolfe. He was not a strategist, but he was a gallant fighting General, and his one object, which he frequently asserted, was to "get at" the enemy. He was like the average chess-player who seizes the occasion of a brilliant but inconclusive "check" and neglects the unostentatious move which, followed up, would end in "mate."

To make the matter clear some preliminary remarks are

¹ The small bay situated about 1½ mile above Quebec, and now known as Wolfe's Cove, where General Wolfe landed to attack the French army before Quebec.

² Fortescue, *Hist.*, vol. ii. pp. 387, 388.

necessary. First, as to the condition of the French Colony when, in June 1759, Wolfe and his army sailed up the St Lawrence. The affairs of the Colony were a faithful reflex of the affairs of the Mother Country; *there* The Pompadour reigned supreme, and was in the zenith of her career of reckless extravagance, engaged in squandering the 36 millions of livres which it is recorded formed the *gages d'amour* of a foolish King. The Court of Louis XV. was honeycombed with intrigue. None prospered without the goodwill of the King's mistress. Peculation and corruption permeated every department of the State. The King acted up to his maxim, *Après moi le déluge*. The Government of the Colonies was the duty of the Department of Marine affairs, and of this the Abbé Bernis has recorded his views: it was "a chaos of abuses; there was no system of accounting; there was no order; the principles of administration were erroneous, and honesty was almost unknown."¹ In Canada, as was to be expected, the servants copied the example set by their master. The head of the administration was the Marquis de Vaudreuil. When, after the loss of the Colony, the great trial took place in Paris of those suspected of guilt in the "Frauds com-

mitted in Canada," Vaudreuil stood acquitted, and we may leave it at that; but it is certain that if he did not connive at the frauds, his weak duplicity formed no check on the frauds of his subordinates. Of these the principal was the Intendant François Bigot, and he was a man of abominable character. As far back as 1745 Bigot had begun to acquire an unenviable notoriety. He was shrewdly suspected of having profited by the surrender of Louisburg in that year, when Pepperel and his New Englanders, to the surprise of all the world, captured the fortress. Montcalm recorded the *modus operandi* in his Journal, and adds: "Ainsi fit M. B(igot) en 1745 . . . M. Prevost² élève de M. Bigot marche à grands pas sur les traces de son maître." On his return to France he obtained the favour of The Pompadour; through her influence the proceedings against him on account of Louisburg were quashed, and he was appointed Intendant of New France. In this post he ruled the finances and the civil administration of Canada for ten years, and of these ten years Montcalm records: "Depuis dix ans, le pays a changé de face. Avant ce temps on y étoit heureux, parceque avec peu on avoit toutes les choses nécessaires à la vie en abondance. . . . Verrés³ arrive; en construisant l'édifice d'une fortune immense, il as-

¹ Bernis to Choiseul, quoted by Perkins, 'France under Louis XV.'

² Intendant at Louisburg when captured by Amherst in 1758.

³ Bigot is designated by the name of the Roman Governor of Sicily notorious for his extortions.

socie à ses rapines quelques gens nécessaires à ses vices ou à ses plaisirs. . . .”

There is no necessity to paint Bigot further, but he had brought to his assistance a man whose power for evil was even more pronounced than his own, inasmuch as he appears to have been a more adept scoundrel; this was Joseph Cadet, originally a butcher's apprentice, now, at the instance of Bigot, created Munitionnaire-Général. With these two as directing geniuses, the class of the rank and file can be imagined. There were a number of them, all tarred with the same brush; the only two that need mention are Péan and De Vergor. Madame Péan was quite openly Bigot's mistress, De Vergor was his friend and had been his accomplice in more than one shady transaction. He was a Captain in the Colony troops of New France. We shall hear of him again.

In the hands of these precious rascals the finances of the Colony were in chaos. The custom was that the Intendant paid for the requirements of the administration by bills of exchange which were presented annually to the Treasury at home. These had increased in the ten years of Bigot's control from 2 millions to 30 millions of livres. The King cared nothing for the welfare of the Colony, but he cared much for any curtailment of his spending powers. The crash came when, in 1759, the French Government ordered the cessation of acceptance of

the bills beyond a sum which represented only a tithe of the whole. The King went further, and an official was sent to examine the accounts of the Intendant. The Minister of Marine, no longer a supporter, was evidently playing for his own safety, and prepared to sacrifice his representative. Bigot acknowledged a profit of 600,000 livres in the year 1759, and the Minister wrote: "Regarding the reasons that you give in justification of the increase of your fortune . . . they appear to me as singular as the assurance with which you regard them as legitimate, especially on the part of an Intendant. . . ." It was evident that the game was up. To bury the evidences against them in the ruins of the whole Colony henceforth became an easily understood policy on the part of Bigot and his henchman Cadet.

The military affairs of the Colony were in the hands of the Marquis de Montcalm, and he was a man of honour, almost alone in this respect in this maelstrom of dishonour. In his Journal, which is an interesting human document, is an entry: "Shall I be able to preserve my innocence, as I have done up to the present, in the midst of this corruption." Vaudreuil hated him with a bitterness that almost amounted to insanity. I believe Vaudreuil had a genuine love for Canada, but it appears probable that he would go to any length to cast a slur on his rival, and this is a factor to be remembered.

This brief sketch of the situation must suffice. Much more might be written; but enough has been said to show the discord that prevailed in the French camp, and the suspicions that may naturally arise in connection with the events which followed.

On the English side the affairs of the campaign had not progressed satisfactorily. Fixity of purpose was, unfortunately, not a strong trait in Wolfe's character; his schemes for the attack oscillated to an extent which irritated his subordinates. His state of health was wretched, and the friction with his Staff reacted on his nerves and increased his physical disability. He had been severely defeated in a frontal attack, which he insisted on making against all advice, on the 31st July. August had closed without any progress, and the Admiral was throwing out warnings that the time for Fleet operations was drawing to an end. Wolfe gave evidence of despair in his despatch to Pitt of the 2nd September. It was at this crisis that one of the brigadiers¹ returned from a reconnaissance up the river, which had extended for some thirty-five miles above the town, and during which he had examined very carefully the possibilities of conveying the army by water and landing at a point some distance above Quebec. In consequence

of his representations, Wolfe directed his three subordinate generals to confer together and to tender their advice as to the best method of continuing the operations. The result of this conference was embodied in a document, dated 29th August, which contained a recommendation to abandon the idea of attacking the enemy *below* the town, and to transfer the force to a distance *above* the town, where "we are (shall be) between him (the French Commander) and his provisions, and between him and the army opposing General Amherst."²

The town of Quebec stands at one end of an elevated tableland which falls abruptly to the St Lawrence on one side, and rather less abruptly on the rest of its perimeter, to the smaller rivers, St Charles and Cap Rouge. The former river joins the St Lawrence just below the town; the latter takes its name from the headland which forms the up-river end of the Quebec plateau. Roughly, the plateau is shoulder-of-mutton shape, the town being on the narrow or down-river end. The length from the town, at one extremity, to Cap Rouge on the other, is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the greatest width about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Beyond the plateau on the landward side is the broad valley of the St Charles river, merging into the low-lying levels about the Cap Rouge

¹ The Hon. James Murray.

² Amherst was then advancing through the upper country towards Montreal. He did not, however, make much progress until the following year.

river,—the landscape beyond these rivers rises gradually to the higher hills, and at the time of which I am writing there were large areas of cultivated lands and several villages of considerable dimensions scattered both in the valley and the uplands.

At Cap Rouge a deep wide gorge admitted the river of that name to the St Lawrence, and beyond this gorge the abrupt coast-line resumed its features at St Augustin, gradually becoming less pronounced in character, until a mile or two short of the headland called Pointe aux Trembles the foreshore became comparatively low and easy of access. Needless to say at this period, in a Colony which was still sparsely populated, the means of communication by road were neither good nor numerous. The Colonists, in fact, relied largely on water carriage on the great river. Nevertheless, the plateau itself was fairly well provided for, and there were several roads, more or less good, connecting the villages and cultivated lands of the St Charles valley with the town of Quebec. Now, it is a point of importance to remember that, ascending the river towards Pointe aux Trembles, the area of opened country gradually contracted and the roads which passed through it tended to merge, until, near the Pointe, there was but one highway, which was the great and only artery connect-

ing the Lower Colony with the upper districts, and finally leading to Montreal. This road ran along the river bank, and the country beyond it was densely wooded, marshy in places, and broken by numerous streams.

I am sorry to have to enter into these details, but they are necessary to explain the strategic importance of the advice tendered to Wolfe. This advice was, in effect,—“lay your army across the enemy communications at a point he must cross to obtain access to his provisions and stores, which are all in the Upper Colony, and relinquish the idea of attacking near Quebec, the result of which, even if successful, will force him to retire on his base.” To this might be added that Wolfe’s army was much too small to contain the enemy in the open areas, and there could be nothing to prevent a retirement around the flank of a British force facing Quebec on the plateau. I do not allege that this advice had been in the minds of Wolfe’s subordinates from the beginning. I think, rather, that it occurred neither to Wolfe nor his subordinates until after the reconnaissance already referred to. It was, however, obviously sound. Wolfe at once “acquiesced,” and took steps to put the project into execution. He wrote to Pitt and told him so.¹

By September 6 the preliminary arrangements had been effected, and the army

¹ Despatch of the 2nd September 1759.

was on shipboard above Quebec, anchored off Cap Rouge. The French had observed the movement carefully and accurately, and the reports of their intelligence officer, one De Remigny, fully detailed what was going on. The enemy force available to defend the posts above Quebec had been augmented, and De Bougainville, who commanded, had some 2400 men under him, his headquarters being Cap Rouge. The number of men that Wolfe had been able to assemble on the ships did not exceed 3700 men.

On the 7th, Wolfe issued his orders for the attack. He concluded: "When the coast has been examined and the best landing-places pitched upon, the troops will be ordered to disembark, perhaps this night's tide. . . ." At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the General, accompanied by his principal officers, ascended the river in the sloop *Hunter*, and went as far as Pointe aux Trembles. We have no record of the consultations that occurred during this reconnaissance, but the tide would not have favoured the movement of troops before 4 A.M. on the 8th—possibly this is the tide referred to by Wolfe; at all events, no further orders for the attack were issued, and for some reason it was delayed.

On the 8th September Wolfe issued fresh orders; these were more precise and detailed. A battalion and the Light Infantry were ordered to proceed at night and come to anchor off Pointe aux Trembles;

five other battalions were to embark on the boats ready to proceed up river "with the first of the morning tide" (that is about 5.15 A.M. on the 9th). The mode of landing and the place of landing were indicated. The place was the one already referred to where the foreshore was low, and where the Colony roads merged into the main highway. During the day the weather changed and set in for rain, and the orders were cancelled, though the advanced party did in fact proceed to Pointe aux Trembles.

On the 9th September the whole project was definitely abandoned: "As the weather is so bad that no military operations can take place, and as the men are so excessively crowded in the transports . . . it is ordered that the undermentioned troops be landed at the Mill upon the South shore. . . ."

It has been the fashion of writers on this Campaign, or of Wolfe's "Life," to assert that he never had any intention of carrying out the advice of his Council of War, and that his acquiescence was merely a blind to cover his real intentions. I do not think the evidence supports any such conclusion; rather, I think, it points with certainty to a definite purpose to carry out the advice given, but I agree that he was not whole-hearted in the affair. Had he been so the rain on the 9th would not have deterred him, for bad weather was rather in his favour than the reverse, as

impeding the land movements of the enemy; nor was the reconnaissance of the 7th really necessary, for the ground had already been well observed. I suspect that Wolfe had already some information before him which led up to the events now to be described, and this information, whatever it was, induced him to adopt an attitude of hesitation.

On the morning of the 9th September, Major Barré, "Deputy Adjutant" of the force, arrived at Wolfe's headquarters on board the *Sutherland*. He had evidently travelled in haste from the old headquarters opposite Quebec, and it is a little remarkable that he should have been absent from Wolfe's side during the events of the preceding days. It may be merely a coincidence, but his arrival synchronised with the orders to land and refresh the troops, which marked the abandonment of the attack at Pointe aux Trembles. On the same date a deserter arrived from the French lines below Quebec, and was received on board one of H.M. ships stationed off the Beauport shore, where, it must be remembered, were the French headquarters. He was transferred to the *Stirling Castle* the same afternoon. At 4 A.M. on the following morning (10th) signals were made to the *Seahorse*—which was stationed to guard the land end of the communications with the up-river force—to send a boat ashore for letters for the General. A "packet" was

brought off and delivered to Wolfe. Now, it is clear that this packet was of an urgent nature to merit being despatched in the night through dangerous country necessitating an escort. This packet, allowing for the distance to be traversed, the state of the tide, and other things, would probably have reached Wolfe's hands at about 8 o'clock in the morning. General Townshend, one of Wolfe's Brigadiers, made the following entry in his diary on this date (10th): "By some intelligence the General has had, he has changed his mind as to the place he intended to land; heard we had some deserters from the enemy's camp at Beauport." This is a very significant circumstance, and it seems impossible to dissociate the deserter, the urgent packet, and the decision of the General.

Within a short time after receipt of the "packet" (three or four hours at most) a resolution was taken, or at all events announced, which abruptly changed the whole character of the campaign. The General proceeded with the principal officers of his Staff by barge to Goreham's Post, off which the *Seahorse* was at anchor, and there announced, evidently to the great astonishment of his subordinates, that he intended to attack Quebec by landing at the Anse au Foulon. This spot lay across the river and at some distance below the point on which the observers were standing, not less than 2900 yards away; consequently no very clear idea of the place

could be gathered. A small encampment was, however, visible, and some other details. It was obviously defended; equally obviously it was a difficult place at which to land, with high, precipitous banks rising from the shore of the little bay, into which a small stream ran through a narrow glen. It is rather remarkable that this place appears now for the first time in the records of the campaign. Wolfe pointed it out to his companions evidently without much knowledge of it, for he stated that it was distant about 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles above Quebec, whereas in fact it was not more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile. It was clearly unknown to his Staff. It almost seems that Wolfe himself had only recently heard of it. Besides, there was another place, the Anse St Michel, some three-quarters of a mile higher up the river than the Foulon, and immediately opposite Goreham's Post, which the observers on the 10th of September could much more easily have examined, and this had often been in Wolfe's mind as a place for landing. What was the reason of his casting off this old love and suddenly pitching on a new and apparently hitherto unconsidered one?

At this point we must leave the English camp for a moment and examine certain happenings on the French side. It appears that up to at least the 6th of September the Officer in command at the Anse au Foulon was a certain M. de St Martin, and he has been de-

scribed as a brave and experienced officer—probably, too, he was honest and loyal. On that date he was posted to another command, and his post was placed in charge of De Vergor! I have already alluded to this person as a creature of Bigot's, and it is only necessary to add that he had been tried by court-martial a year or so previously for very suspicious circumstances in connection with the surrender of the Fort of Beau-séjour to the English. Foligné, who wrote a diary of the events of the siege from the French point of view, recorded, under date 13th September, that the English attacked at the Anse au Foulon, and adds: "Poste où M. Vergor étoit placé depuis trois ou quatre jours"; this would make the date of this curious change of Commanders the 9th or 10th of September. The author of the last part of Montoalm's Journal noted the occurrence in these words: "M. de Vergor à qui on avoit mal à propos confié celui (la poste) de l'Anse au Foulon." Another French writer says: "On ne pouvoit mieux seconder les intentions du Général Anglois." Thus, apart from the opinions expressed of the man himself, it seems clear that this person of very doubtful reputation was placed in charge of the point selected by Wolfe for attack, some time between the 6th and 10th of September; in other words, at the precise time when the idea of attacking there was developing!

Another strange thing happened on the French side which

seems to form a link in the chain. The French battalion of Guienne had for a long time been retained in reserve at the bridgehead over the St Charles river near Quebec. On the 5th September, Montcalm, acting in his capacity as Commander of the French regular troops, ordered the battalion to take post as a reserve on the highroad immediately behind the Anse St Michel—that is, within a few minutes' march of Anse au Foulon. This arrangement evidently did not meet with Vaudreuil's approval, for he countermanded the order, and the battalion returned to its camp. Another entry, which may perhaps refer to the same incident, or possibly to a second attempt on the part of Montcalm to reinforce this point, is recorded in the journal of the Abbé Rechar: "Ordre donné par M. de Montcalm et en suite révoquée par M. de Vaudreuil, disant 'nous verrons cela demain,' au bataillon de Guienne d'aller camper au Foulon." Perhaps the most damning evidence on the point is given by Vaudreuil himself: "Je comptais beaucoup sur le bataillon de Guyenne, je le croyais toujours sur le hauteur de Québec; mais M. de Montcalm l'avoit rappelé le même jour à l'entrée de la nuit sans m'en prévenir!" I call this evidence damning, because Vaudreuil was certainly not telling the truth. Qui s'exouse, s'accuse! In the event the battalion was not available at the critical moment; had it been, Wolfe could never have effected a footing on the

heights at the Anse au Foulon. The removal of the battalion seems to have been intentional and very suspicious.

Now let us return to Wolfe. We left him suddenly resolved on the 10th to attack at the Anse au Foulon. On the face of it, there seems no very good reason why the attack should not have taken place that night, or at all events the next night (the 11th). It was obviously desirable to get the matter started, lest the news should leak out to the other side; yet Wolfe from the first fixed the day of the attack as the 12th, or rather the morning of the 13th, and this leads to another phase of the business. It had frequently been the custom of the French to bring convoys of provisions by water from their dépôts in the upper river to Quebec. They were short of land transport, and that method was slow. It had become more and more difficult to carry out the carriage by water, as the English assumed a greater mastery of the river by passing their war vessels above the town. Such a convey had been organised by Cadet, the Munitionaire-Général, on the 10th of August, and a long series of orders and arrangements regarding it are on record. Escorts were to follow it on land, patrol boats were used on the river; some trouble had occurred owing to its being mistaken for the enemy during some part of the journey, and it was ordered that in future passwords should be used, by

which these on shore should recognise the convoy boats. This particular convoy in the end arrived safely at its destination at the latter end of August. The whole affair was evidently a big undertaking, and managed with great care and caution, for provisions were very precious and sorely needed.

On the 12th of September—that is the very date fixed by Wolfe for the attack—Cadet sent a letter to De Bougainville: “J’ai reçu la lettre que vous m’avez fait l’honneur de m’écrire ce jour . . . je vous prie, Monsieur, de vouloir bien passer les batteaux cette nuit s’il y a de la possibilité, sans quoi je serai obligé de faire passer demain des charettes . . . mais s’ils venoient par eau cela nous épargnerait bien de la peine.” Such a sudden request to send a convoy off “*this night*” seems strange, in view of the elaborate precautions previously taken. Stranger still is the fact that, at 11 P.M. on the 12th, two deserters came on board the sloop *Hunter*, bearing the information that a convoy bringing provisions down the river was to pass that night. Strangest of all is the certainty that the French convoy never started; yet the posts along the river were warned of an approaching convoy, and allowed the English flotilla to pass as such. Just think of this concatenation of circumstances. Wolfe, for no very apparent reason, fixed on the 12th for his venture. On the same

day Cadet arranges for a convoy: at the critical moment deserters arrive to convey the information (the confirmation?) that the convoy has been arranged, and probably the passwords at the same time; these deserters came from the very place about to be attacked, in which De Vergor, with his unsavoury past, has been recently appointed to command!

And then, what are we to think of the facts attending the transport of the attacking force over the seven miles of river which lay between the fleet at Cap Rouge and the objective at the Foulon? Every writer on the subject regards the whole movement as conducted silently in the darkness, and as a complete surprise to the enemy. But such a conception is not tenable in reality. The night was moonlit, the moon being within a day of the last quarter—a fact entirely neglected by the historians. It would not be possible to conceal the movement of thirty large boats passing down the river. Let us assume that the fiction of the convoy had been so thoroughly imparted to the watchers that they took no notice of the boats, but, besides the boats, the whole fleet (except the *Sutherland*) of warships and transports and floating batteries followed an hour later. This *must* have been both visible and audible on shore. Can we imagine that no report of this important movement was made to the Commander

of the French *corps d'observation*? By any one who reads carefully the Bougainville correspondence, which is all reprinted in Dr Doughty's splendid volumes on the Siege of Quebec, and contains the observations of that acute observer De Remigny, such a supposition must be rejected. Where was Bougainville—what became of Remigny on this momentous night? As regards the latter, all we know is that two days previously the mounted orderly that had been promised him had not been sent, and that his own horse had been stolen, and then he fades out of existence as far as we are concerned. Yet he must have had something to say, if his records had been preserved. But De Bougainville was more important. He was supposed to be at Cap Rouge. Montreuil addressed a letter to him there on the 11th. Cadet addressed the letter already mentioned on the 12th to the same place. I have a great respect for Dr Doughty's opinions, and he explains De Bougainville's absence by assuming that he followed a movement of the ships *up* the river, while the boats were going *down*. I am afraid so simple an explanation will not bear examination, for the logs of the ships show that no movement up the river took place. Bougainville himself makes no reference to such a reason, nor does De Levis nor Vaudreuil, and they certainly

would have jumped at some explanation if one had been forthcoming.

Between four o'clock and four-thirty¹ the sound of the guns fired from the Samos battery near the Anse au Foulon (that was after the landing of the advanced body) was plainly heard on the ships *Stirling Castle*, *Centurion*, and *Captain*; they were lying off Pointe Levis, five miles away, in the Quebec basin. Bougainville was no farther away, or at least should have been no farther away, in the opposite direction—and if we imagine that the direction of the wind carried the sound away (the wind was south-west), still De Remigny's post, not a mile away, *must* have known all about it. Yet De Bougainville says, "*Je n'en fus averti qu'à neuf heures du matin.*" Incredible! Five hours to convey the news between four and five miles! I am afraid the only conclusion is that De Bougainville was not at his post. By what means he was lured away is not known, but there is a letter in the correspondence that perhaps gives the clue. His absence meant that no movement of the flying column, which he commanded, took place. Wolfe's course of action after landing certainly indicates that he anticipated no interruption from De Bougainville, for he marched directly inland to the St Foy road, a mile away, and then along this road towards Quebec. By six

¹ Both hours are recorded, but the ships' logs seem to have always been marked in half hours and never at exact times.

o'clock the entire force was a mile and a half away from the landing-place, which was weakly guarded. By every military calculation, Bougainville's column of 2000 men should have destroyed the few soldiers and sailors at the Foulon, leaving Wolfe's little army completely *en l'air* to face the numerically greatly superior forces of the French in his front and a strong attack in rear.

It is not necessary to carry the matter further; to describe the, apparently, organised confusion which existed in the French lines; the absence of co-operation with Montcalm; the refusal to supply him with artillery from the fortress. The Journal of Montcalm, and the writings of the Chevalier Johnston, who was with him, are eloquent testimony of the opinions held by eye-witnesses, and they are confirmed by others. There is no need to give evidence of the continual presence of Bigot and Cadet in Vaudreuil's councils; of the destruction of Montcalm's papers; of the accusations contained in Vaudreuil's letters, so obviously made to shield himself. There is enough in the foregoing to give almost conclusive evidence that the reason why Wolfe abandoned the advice tendered by his councillors was that he

had received information that an attack at the Foulon would not be opposed. There were traitors in the French camp, and Wolfe decided to take advantage of the fact. In this not the slightest blame attaches to him. The intelligence service of every General is charged with the duty of finding out the weak points of their opponents, and action against them is his duty.

On the English side no written evidence of the negotiations exist. Wolfe personally destroyed his journal of the days of crisis preceding the attack. Barré in all probability alone shared the secret, and Barré left no papers. Than he, probably no man could keep a secret better. If blame attaches to General Wolfe, it was that he preferred a brilliant but inconclusive "check" to the surer move recommended to him, which humanly speaking must have led to "checkmate." Had he carried out the advice given him he would himself have obtained the glory of conquering Canada, and rendered the campaign of 1760 unnecessary, and have saved the horrors of the winter of 1759-60, when the famished, frost-bitten garrison of Quebec died in hundreds, but kept the flag flying.

AN AIRMAN'S OUTINGS.

FOR weeks we had talked guardedly of "it" and "them"—of the greatest day of the Push and the latest form of warfare. Details of the twin mysteries had been rightly kept secret by the red-hatted Olympians who really knew, though we of the fighting branches had heard sufficient to stimulate an appetite for rumour and exaggeration. Consequently we possessed our souls in impatience and dabbled in conjecture.

Small forts moving on the caterpillar system of traction used for heavy guns were to crawl across No Man's Land, enfilade the enemy front line with quick-firing and machine guns, and hurl bombs on such of the works and emplacements as they did not ram to pieces,—thus a confidential adjutant, who seemed to think he had admitted me into the inner circle of knowledge tenanted only by himself and the G.S.O. people (I, II., and III., besides untapped nondescripts). Veterans gave tips on war in the open country, or chatted airily about another tour of such places as Le Catelet, Le Cateau, Mons, the Maubeuge district, and Namur. The cautious listened in silence, and distilled only two facts from the dubious mixture of fancy. The first was that we were booked for a big advance one of these fine days; and the second that, after the overture of bom-

bardment, new armoured cars, caterpillared and powerfully armed, would make their bow to Brother Boche.

The balloon of swollen conjecture floated over the back of the Front until it was destroyed by the quick-fire of authentic orders, which necessarily revealed much of the plan and many of the methods. On the afternoon of September 14 all the officers of our aerodrome were summoned to an empty shed. There we found our own particular General, who said more to the point in five minutes than the rumourists had said in five weeks. There was to be a grand attack next morning. The immediate objectives were not distant, but their gain would be of enormous value. Every atom of energy must be concentrated on the task. It was hoped that the element of surprise would be on our side, helped by a new engine of war christened the Tank. The nature of this strange animal, male and female, was then explained.

Next came an exposition of the part allotted to the Flying Corps. No German machines could be allowed near enough to the lines for any observation. We must shoot all Hun machines at sight and give them no rest. Our bombers should make life a burden on the enemy lines of communication. Infantry and transport

were to be worried, whenever possible, by machine-gun fire from above. Machines would be detailed for contact work with our infantry.

No more bubbles of hot air were blown around the mess table. Only the evening was between us and the day of days. The time before dinner was filled by the testing of machines and the writing of those cheerful, non-committal letters that precede big happenings at the front. Our flight had visitors to dinner, but the shadow of to-morrow was too insistent for the racket customary on a guest night. It was as if the electricity had been withdrawn from the atmosphere and condensed for use when required. The dinner talk was curiously restrained. The usual shop chatter prevailed, leavened by snatches of bantering cynicism from those infants of the world who thought that to a *beau sabreur* one must juggle verbally with life, death, and Archie shells. Even the war babies (three of them died very gallantly before we re-assembled for breakfast next day) had bottled most of their exuberance. Understanding silences were sandwiched between yarns. A wag searched for the Pagliacci record, and set the gramophone to churn out "Vesti la Giubba." The guests stayed to listen politely to a few revue melodies, and then slipped away. The rest turned in immediately, in view of the jobs at early dawn.

"Good-night, you chaps," said one of the flight-commanders. "See you over Mossy-Face in the morning!"

In the morning some of us saw him spin earthwards over Mossy-Face Wood, surrounded by Hun machines.

Long before the dawn of September 15, I awoke to the roar of engines, followed by an overhead drone as a party of bombers circled round until they were ready to start. When this noise had died away, the dull boom of an intense bombardment was able to make itself heard. I rolled over and went to sleep again, for my own show was not due to start until three hours later. The Flying Corps programme on the great day was a marvel of organisation. The jobs fitted into one another and into the general tactical scheme of the advance as exactly as the parts of a flawless motor. At no time could enemy craft steal towards the lines to spy out the land. Every sector was covered by defensive patrols which travelled northward and southward, southward and northward, eager to pounce on any black-crossed stranger. Offensive patrols moved and fought over Boche territory until they were relieved by other offensive patrols. The machines on artillery observation were thus worried only by Archie, and the reconnaissance formations were able to do their work with little interruption, except when they passed well outside the patrol areas. Throughout the day

those guerillas of the air, the bombing craft, went across and dropped eggs on anything between general headquarters and a railway line. A machine first made known the exploit of the immortal Tank that waddled down High Street, Flers, spitting bullets and inspiring sick fear. And there were several free-lance stunts, such as aeroplane attacks on reserve troops or on trains.

The three squadrons attached to our aerodrome had to the day's credit two long reconnaissances, three offensive patrols, and four bomb raids. Six Hun machines were destroyed on these shows, and the bombers did magnificent work at vital points. At 2 A.M. they dropped eggs on the German Somme headquarters. An hour later they deranged the railway station of a large garrison town. For the remaining time before sunset they were not so busy. They merely destroyed two ammunition trains, cut two railway lines, damaged an important railhead, and sprayed a bivouac ground.

An orderly called me at 4.15 A.M. for the big offensive patrol. The sky was a dark-grey curtain decorated by faintly twinkling stars. I dressed to the thunderous accompaniment of the guns, warmed myself with a cup of hot cocoa, donned my flying kit, and hurried to the aerodrome. We gathered around C., the patrol leader, who gave us final instructions about his method of at-

tack. I tested my gun and climbed into the machine. By now the east had turned to a light grey with pink smudges from the forefinger of sunrise. Punctually at five o'clock the order, "Start up!" passed down the long line of machines.

"Contact, sir!" said the flight-commander's mechanic, his hand on a propeller blade.

"Contact," repeated the pilot. Around swung the propeller, and the engine began a loud metallic roar, then softened as it was throttled down. The pilot waved his hand, the chocks were pulled from under the wheels, and the machine moved forward. The throttle was again opened full out as the bus raced into the wind until flying speed had been attained, when it skimmed gently from the ground.

The morning light increased every minute, and the grey of the sky was merging into blue. The faint, hovering ground-mist was not sufficient to screen our landmarks. The country below was a shadowy patchwork of coloured pieces. The woods, fantastic shapes of dark green, stood out strongly from the mosaic of brown and green fields. The pattern was divided and subdivided by the straight, poplar-bordered roads peculiar to France. We passed on to the dirty strip of wilderness which is the actual front. The battered villages and disorderly ruins looked like hieroglyphics traced on wet sand. A sea of smoke rolled over the

ground for miles. It was a by-product of the most terrific bombardment in the history of trench warfare. Through it hundreds of gun-flashes twinkled like the lights of a Chinese garden.

Having reached a height of 12,000 feet, we crossed the trenches south of Bapaume. As the danger that stray bullets might fall on friends no longer existed, pilots and observers fired a few rounds into space to make sure their guns were behaving properly. Archie began his frightfulness early. He concentrated on the leader's machine, but the still dim light spoiled his aim, and many of the bursts were dotted between the craft behind. I heard the customary *wouff! wouff! wouff!* followed in one case by the *hs-s-s-s* of passing fragments. We swerved and dodged to disconcert the gunners. After five minutes of hide-and-seek, we shook off this group of Archie batteries.

The flight-commander headed for Mossy-Face Wood, scene of many air battles and bomb raids. Around it are clustered several aerodromes. One of these, just east of the wood, was the home of the Fokker star, Boelcke. C. led us to it, for it was his great ambition to account for Germany's best pilot. As we approached, I looked down and saw eight machines with black Maltese crosses on their planes, about three thousand feet below. They had clipped wings of a peculiar whiteness, and they were ranged one

above the other like platforms on scaffolding. A cluster of small scouts swooped down from Heaven-knows-what height and hovered above us; but C. evidently did not see them, for he dived steeply on the Huns underneath, accompanied by the two machines nearest him. The other group of enemies then dived.

I looked up and saw a narrow biplane, apparently a Roland, rushing towards our bus. My pilot (in those days I was not myself a pilot, but acted as observer) turned on a steep bank and side-slipped to disconcert the Boche's aim. The black-crossed hawk swept over at a distance of less than a hundred yards. I raised my gun-mounting, sighted, and pressed the trigger. Three shots rattled off and my Lewis gun ceased fire. Intensely annoyed at being cheated out of such a splendid target, I applied immediate action, pulled back the cocking-handle and pressed the trigger again. Nothing happened. After one more immediate action test, I examined the gun and found that an incoming cartridge and an empty case were jammed together in the breech. To remedy the stoppage, I had to remove spade-grip and body-cover. As I did this, I heard an ominous *ta-ta-ta-ta* from the returning German scout. My pilot cart-wheeled round and made for the Hun, his gun spitting continuously through the propeller. The two machines

raced at each other until only some fifty yards separated them. Then the Boche swayed, turned aside, and put his nose down. We dropped after him, with our front machine-gun still speaking. The Roland's glide merged into a dive, and we imitated him. Suddenly a streak of flame came from his petrol tank, and the next second he was rushing earthwards with two streamers of flame trailing behind.

I was unable to see the end of this vertical dive, for two more single-seaters were upon us. They plugged away while I remedied the stoppage, and several bullets ventilated the fuselage quite close to my cockpit. When my gun was itself again, I changed the drum of ammunition and hastened to fire at the nearest Hun. He was evidently unprepared, for he turned and moved across our tail. As he did so, I raked his bus from stem to stern. I looked at him hopefully, for the range was very short, and I expected to see him drop towards the ground at several miles a minute. He sailed on serenely. This is an annoying habit of enemy machines when one is sure that, by the rules of the game, they ought to be destroyed. The machine in question was probably hit, however, for it did not return, and I saw it begin a glide as though the pilot meant to land. We switched our attention to the remaining Hun, but this one was not anxious to fight alone. He dived a

few hundred feet, with tail well up, looking for all the world like a trout when it drops back into water. Afterwards he flattened out and went east.

During our fights we had become separated from the remainder of our party. I searched all round the compass, but could find neither friend nor foe. We returned to the aerodrome where hostile craft were first sighted. There was no sign of C.'s machine or of the others who dived on the first group of Huns. Several German machines were at rest in the aerodrome.

Finding ourselves alone, we passed on towards the lines. I twisted my neck in every direction, as if it were made of rubber, for over enemy country only a constant lookout above, below, and on all sides can save a machine from a surprise attack. After a few minutes, I spotted six craft bearing towards us from a great height. Through field-glasses I was able to see their black crosses, and I fingered my machine-gun expectantly. The strangers dived in two lots of three. I waited until the first three were within 300 yards' range and opened fire. One of them swerved away, but the other two passed right under us. Something sang to the right, and I found that part of a landing wire was dangling helplessly from its socket. I thanked whatever gods there be that it was not a flying wire, and turned to meet the next three

Huns. We side-slipped, and they pulled out of their dive well away from us. With nose down and engine full out, we raced towards the lines and safety. Three of the attackers were unable to keep up with us and we left them behind.

The other three Germans, classed by my pilot as Halberstadts, had more than our speed. They did not attack at close quarters immediately, but flew 200 to 300 yards behind, ready to pounce at their own moment. Two of them got between my gun and our tail-plane, so that they were safe from my fire. The third was slightly above our height, and for his benefit I stood up and rattled through a whole ammunition-drum. Here let me say I do not think I hit him, for he was not in difficulties. He dived below us to join his companions, possibly because he did not like being under fire when they were not. To my surprise and joy, he fell slick on one of the other two Hun machines. This latter broke into two pieces, which fell like stones. The machine responsible for my luck side-slipped, spun a little, recovered, and went down to land. The third made off east. In plain print and at a normal time, this episode shows little that is comic. But when it happened I was in a state of high tension, and this, combined with the startling realisation that a Hun pilot had saved me and destroyed his friend, seemed irresistibly comic. I

cackled with laughter, and was annoyed because my pilot did not see the joke.

We reached the lines without further trouble from anything but Archie. The pink streaks of daybreak had now disappeared beneath the whole body of the sunrise, and the sky was of that intense blue which is the secret of France. What was left of the ground-mist shimmered as it congealed in the sunlight. The pall of smoke from the guns had doubled in volume. The Ancre sparkled brightly. We cruised around in a search for others of our party, but found none. A defensive patrol was operating between Albert and the trenches. We joined it for half an hour, at the end of which I heard a "Halloa!" from the speaking-tube.

"What's up now?" I asked.

"Going to have a look at the war," was the pilot's reply.

Before I grasped his meaning he had shut off the engine and we were gliding towards the trenches. At 1200 feet we switched on, flattened out, and looked for any movement below. There was no infantry advance at the moment, but below Courcellette what seemed to be two ungainly masses of black slime were slithering over the ground. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. One of them actually crawled among the scrap-heaps that fringed the ruins of the village. Only then did the thought that they might be Tanks suggest itself. Afterwards I discovered that this was so.

The machine rocked violently as a projectile hurtled by underneath us. The pilot remembered the broken landing-wire and steered for home. When we had landed and written a combat report, we compared notes with others who had returned from the expedition. C., we learned, was down at last, after seventeen months of flying on active service, with only one break for any appreciable time. He destroyed one more enemy before the Boches got him. In the dive he got right ahead of the two machines that followed him. As these hurried to his assistance, they saw an enemy plane turn over, show a white, gleaming belly, and drop in zigzags. C.'s bus was then seen to heel over into a vertical dive, and plunge down, spinning rhythmically on its axis. Probably he was shot dead and fell over on to the joystick, and this put the machine to its last dive. The petrol tank of the second machine to arrive among the Huns was plugged by a bullet, and the pilot was forced to land. Weeks later, his observer wrote us a letter from a prison camp in Hanover. The third bus got back to tell the tale.

C. was one of the greatest pilots produced by the war. He was utterly fearless, and had more time over the German lines to his credit than anybody else in the Flying Corps. It was part of his fatalistic creed that Archie should never be dodged, and he would go calmly ahead

when the A.A. guns were at their best. Somehow, the bursts never found him. He had won both the D.S.O. and the M.C. for deeds in the air. Only the evening before, when asked lightly if he was out for a V.C., he said he would rather get Boeleke than the V.C.—and in the end Boeleke probably got him, for he fell over the famous German pilot's aerodrome, and that day the German wireless announced that Boeleke had shot down two more machines. Peace to the ashes of a fine pilot and a very brave man!

Two observers, other than C.'s passenger, had been killed during our patrol. One of them was "Uncle," a captain in the Northumberland Fusiliers. A bullet entered the large artery of his thigh. He bled profusely and lost consciousness in the middle of a fight with two Huns. When he came to, a few minutes later, he grabbed his gun and opened fire on an enemy. After about forty shots the clatter of the gun stopped, and through the speaking-tube a faint voice told the pilot to look round. He did so, and saw a Maltese-crossed biplane falling in flames. Uncle faded into unconsciousness again, and never came back. It is more than possible that if he had put a tourniquet round his thigh, instead of continuing the fight, he might have lived. A great death, you say? One of many such. Only the day before I had helped to lift the limp body of Paddy from the

floor of an observer's cockpit. He had been shot over the heart. He fainted, recovered his senses for ten minutes, and kept two Huns at bay until he died, by which time the trenches were reached.

Imagine yourself under fire in an aeroplane at 10,000 feet. Imagine that only a second ago you were in the country of shadows. Imagine yourself feeling giddy and deadly sick from loss of blood. Imagine what is left of your consciousness to be stabbed insistently by a throbbing pain. Now imagine how you would force yourself in this condition to grasp a machine-gun in your numbed hand, pull back the cocking handle, take careful aim at a fast machine, allowing for deflection, and fire until you sink into death. Some day I hope I shall be allowed to visit Valhalla for a few minutes, to congratulate Paddy and Uncle.

We refreshed ourselves with hot breakfast and cold baths. In the mess the fights were reconstructed. Sudden silences were frequent—an unconscious tribute to C. and the other casualties. At lunch-time we were cheered by the news that the first and second objectives had been reached, that Martinpuich, Courcellette, and Flers had fallen, and that the Tanks had behaved well. After lunch I rested awhile before the long reconnaissance, due to start at three.

Six machines were detailed for this job, but a faulty engine kept one of them on

the ground. The observers marked the course on their maps, and wrote out lists of railway stations. We set off towards Arras. Archie hit out as soon as we crossed to his side of the front. He was especially dangerous that afternoon, as if determined to avenge the German defeat of the morning. Each bus in turn was encoiled by black bursts, and each bus in turn lost height, swerved, or changed its course to defeat the gunner's aim. A piece of H.E. hit our tail-plane, and stayed there until I cut it out for a souvenir when we had returned.

The observers were kept busy with note-book and pencil, for the train movement was far greater than the average, and streaks of smoke courted attention on all the railways. Rolling stock was correspondingly small, and the counting of the trucks in the sidings was not difficult. Road and canal transport was plentiful. As evidence of the urgency of all this traffic, I remarked that no effort at concealment was made. On ordinary days, a German train always shut off steam when we approached; and I have often seen transport passing along the road one minute, and not passing along the road the next. On September 15 the traffic was too urgent for time to be lost by hide-and-seek.

We passed several of our offensive patrols, each of whom escorted us while we were on their beat. It was curious

that there was no activity on the enemy aerodromes. Until we passed Messy-Face on the last lap of the homeward journey we saw no Hun aircraft. Even there the machines with black crosses flew very low, and did not attempt to offer battle.

Nothing out of the ordinary happened until we were about to cross the trenches north of Peronne. Archie then gave a wonderful display. One of his chunks swept the left aileron from the leader's machine, which banked vertically, almost rolled over, and began to spin. For two thousand feet the irregular drop continued, and the observer gave up hope. Luckily for him, the pilot was

not of the same mind, and managed to check the spin by juggling with his rudder-controls. The bus flew home, left wing well down, with the observer leaning far out to the right to restore equilibrium, while the icy rush of air boxed his ears.

We landed, wrote our reports, and took them to headquarters. The day's work had been done, which was all that mattered to any extent, and a very able general told us it was "dom good." But many a day passed before any one sat in the seats left vacant by Uncle and Paddy.

And so to bed, until we were called for another early morning show.

CONTACT.

HALFORD.

I. "IT'S ALL RIGHT, SIR."

SAMSON HALFORD had hardly reached the status of the strong man of the district, for although his limbs were well formed he was not very tall, and he was still very young. And besides, almost every one else in his Yorkshire village also worked in the mines, and thus, you see, had an equal chance of muscular development. But Halford was of those who welcome life with a frolic welcome, and he enjoyed it—oh yes—although he had never been far from home, and had never had any adventures which any one else would have cared to chronicle. His outlook had always been a boy's outlook, and his face was still a boy's face. At seventeen, his real age, he looked fourteen at the most. Some folks said he looked twelve. But he felt himself big enough and strong enough for the Army, and so one day in 1915 he raised his age suddenly to nineteen, and without much more trouble the thing was done.

There was something so jolly in this new life. When the men were drilling all together it was almost like a game, in which every one was striving to do his best. It was so fine to be out of doors instead of underground, to be marching, to be exercising, to be learning new tricks, and all sorts of other new things, and to be having such a pionic.

And he was not altogether among strangers, either. There were some of his old friends near his own age, and Mr Hopkins and Mr Caldwell, shopkeepers of thirty-five or thereabouts, from his own street. Halford still called them "Mister," although they were privates in the same company. They all had to learn as quickly as possible, for it was a reserve battalion, and drafts for one or other of the fronts were being sent out so very frequently. And this was a very famous regiment, and always seemed to be put in the thick of the fighting. So the boy passed through his musketry courses and his other training, and was one of those who were marked ready.

All was excitement when one morning the "ready" men were paraded, and they found themselves being supplied with entirely new uniforms of khaki drill, together with huge sun helmets. Great was the fun of trying on these new things—which told the men, moreover, that they were going to a hotter country, to one of the Eastern scenes of war, of course. Conversation soon included the words *topee*, and *puggaree*, and others of strange sound. Halford was soon in difficulties trying to fasten his *puggaree* to his *topee*, but, like the other novices in this elusive art, he was or-

dered to wait until an old and experienced soldier could put it on for him. Then indeed he felt like an explorer, and the spirit of adventure rose strongly in him again. In a few days the draft of two hundred men with about five officers left the training camp and went away to the port of embarkation. Halford was too excited to feel sad, for was he not travelling through parts of England which he had never seen before, and were there not all sorts of wonders ahead? It would be many weeks before he saw or heard anything of the enemy, he hadn't much idea of what the fighting would be like when he was in it, and he was ready to enjoy everything that he could enjoy before anything unpleasant should occur. The men filed out of the train and on to the transport. How simple it all was! How big the black-painted vessel looked, and yet could it hold all the men that they seemed to be trying to put on board, not only of his own draft, but also of many other regiments too? The cots looked more comfortable than blankets on the ground in a tent. And they were! The mess rooms were large. The food was good. Why, it was better than being in camp. Halford felt as proud of himself as an American millionaire on the *Mauretania*, and probably a great deal more so. Again, he had the sensation, which he could not have explained, that this was indeed life.

The second day out must not be described in cold print.

It certainly was rather lively in the Bay, and Halford had to help clean up the decks around the draft's quarters. But by breakfast-time the next morning all was clean again, and every one was up and was doing his best to forget the worst. The sun shone, appetites were keen, the enemy were far away, submarines were hardly feared, and the voyage ought to be enjoyed at any rate. Porpoises leapt and tumbled at the ship's side, and to Halford, to whom all geese were swans, all porpoises were sharks. Greatly, therefore, was he interested in them.

Truly it was good to be alive on this ship, to tumble out of one's berth in the morning, to go through those physical exercises which braced one up so, to feel the rush through the water, to see strange vessels passing by, to feel so hungry at meal-times, and to be left alone as much as he was so that he could enjoy the voyage in his own way. He did not want particularly to take part in the game of "House" which the older men often played. It was warm, and getting warmer, and he was content to sit about on the decks. Besides, your true soldier is such a splendid sleeper when off duty, and what a glorious sleep one can have at sea.

One day a long low line on the east was pointed out as the coast of Spain. Another morning Halford learnt that the ship had passed Gibraltar in the night, and that the hills visible to the south were actually in Africa. He was a little disappointed at not seeing

Gibraltar. Every English boy seems to have dreamt of that Lion Rock as embodying the British Lion, and of course absolutely impregnable. But he was not to be disappointed with Malta. Valetta was the first foreign town he had ever seen, and he simply gazed at the shore all the time the vessel remained in the harbour. This was something like a harbour too, so landlocked, and so full of ships, and so well defended. Boy-like, he noticed the guns and the French Dreadnoughts before anything. Then there were the queer little boats, and the brown Italian-looking boys who dived over for sixpences and other bright pieces of metal. The whole place was a place of wonders — wonders which would remain in the memory, and make such tales to be told at home. And so the voyage went on. To sea again they went, and perhaps a little nervousness about that unseen enemy lurking below the water was felt throughout the ship; but it did not show itself openly, and the ship still went on safely. After all, everybody was wearing his lifebelt all day, so he would have a chance. Then one morning some black dots appeared away on the horizon, and the news was passed round that the coast of Egypt was in sight. There is something friendly about Egypt. No one looks upon it as a strange country, for was it not here that our friend Joseph, and the Pharaohs, and the Israelites lived? We feel that we

know all about Egypt. And it had a double feeling of friendliness this time, for all knew that once in the Canal there would be no more fear of submarines, and certain rather irksome little restrictions so necessary for safety would no longer be enforced. More ships were passing, too, and this bid fair to be a more interesting day than ever.

What could be finer than the sunlight dancing on the waters of Port Said harbour, the cheers from the warships, the sing-song of the coolies coaling the transport, the life moving on shore, the great camps showing how prepared we were to defend our famous road to India, and the gorgeous Eastern sunset? This was far more exciting than anything Halford had ever seen "on the pictures," for he was now taking part in it himself. He felt the fun of being in the show, and enjoyed himself thoroughly. One of his officers noticed his face. "Well, Halford, how do you like this?" said he. "It's *all right*, sir," said Halford, and looked more like a happy boy of fourteen than ever.

The next two days added to his good times, for they were one long series of new sights, and a mental picture, somewhat blurred perhaps, but with many vivid portions, formed the record of their character. There were the strangely unfamiliar Arabs, there were the familiar khaki-clad British troops in strange surroundings. Here one glimpsed the Empire, saw

flashes of its extent, saw flashes of its greatness. That our transports should be able to use this thin thread of water connecting East and West was wonderful enough. That the men who guarded it and made possible this smooth passage, so like a pleasure-trip up the river, came from Scotland or from New Zealand, showed more than words how we have spread ourselves over the earth. It is *we* who are in Britain, in Egypt, in New Zealand. There is something in this feeling of unity which every one sensed, though perhaps framing his sensations into words not at all. Halford saw "Jooks," as he called them, he saw Maoris, he saw the Indian troops, and he learnt much. He joined in the cries of greeting, and enjoyed the extraordinarily uncouth repartee with which two bodies of our troops when meeting always give vent to their mutual affection. He saw strange birds and real camels in a real desert. He saw what a task the Turks would have in any attempt they might make on the Canal. How hot and dry and dusty the desert did look! It would not be pleasant to march many miles over that, carrying full equipment. At present the stations by the railway which runs along the Canal side looked pleasant enough. It must be the greatest of luck to be placed here for the duration of the war—to be here where danger seemed remote, where prospect of getting back safely seemed

sure. Yet there was a fine feeling at work—a feeling that he at least would be able to say at the end of the war that he had really been in it, that his post had been one where bullets were thickest, that no one had run much greater risks than he. He could not be accused of having chosen the soft billet. So he anticipated the future, premonitions visiting him, and as they were stern, strengthening him. Ismailia and the Bitter Lakes were passed. At night the great eye of the searchlight led them on. He wondered how long the Canal really was. Conversation gave distances varying in accuracy; but it did not much matter, the end was coming, and there were more moments of pleasure at Suez, backed by its mountains and lying, as did the whole visible world then, in a vapour of opalescence, lifting into the world of spirit, an Arabian dream. Halford had no simile beyond that of mother-of-pearl, scarce adequate. But the day faded in beauty, peace claiming this as her realm at least, the last near town he was to see for many days, the next to be in a new continent.

Day followed day, of sea with little but distant view of land, rocky, barren, not welcoming, but urging on rather. Inter-regimental deck-sports strengthened one's enthusiasm for one's own battalion, especially when it supplied the leading men in the general obstacle race. What fun these events were! Who would have imagined such games on the ship?

Great tubes of canvas ventilated those lower quarters now getting so hot. Great baths of canvas enabled all who wished to bathe and even swim every day. Halford rose in chances, for Lieutenant Smith, who had noticed him before, chose him as his servant. He now had opportunity, therefore, of seeing more of the vessel than before. His letter home, not fluent, expressed plainly enough his satisfaction. Clear through the pencilled lines appeared the comfort of his superlative—"It's *all right*, sir." Smith himself found satisfaction in being ministered to by that bright young face, looking forward for adventures. The others noticed him, and "Smith's Baby" almost became a mascot. Halford felt the kindness of their regard and grew in readiness, gaining experience, and learning those arts which the old soldier has known so well of making the very best of every circumstance. He was studying under masters of the "orderly" world, graduates of the Indian army, that university where so much is to be learnt.

The names Aden and Perim, travelling about the decks, told him the next places likely to be seen. Perim he saw, Aden was passed in darkness. Days more of open sea followed, though barren, rocky hills often appeared as the nearest shore. Until one morning the great liner was found to be anchored, and near by on the water sat a little red lightship, near enough for the words "Shatt-el-Arab" to be dis-

tinguished on her side. No land could be seen, but there were other ships about. The end of the long sea-voyage was come, but here was that common obstacle—a bar—and transshipment was necessary before the troops could get up the river to Busra. Once crowded on to the smaller steamer though, sitting patiently packed in her holds, all were conveyed in a few hours up the stream. What thousands of palm-trees, soon learnt to be date-palms! What queer river craft, queerly garbed men on them, queerly garbed women on the shore! Faint warnings of strife to be found here or not far away can now be felt. Here is the place where the Germans tried to block the river by sinking three vessels. Their masts still rise above the stream, but one of them failed to sink in the right place, and swung round by the current lies so that we can easily get through. Here Persia stretches down to the river bank. Halford wonders at the strangeness of the war, which has brought him to such a place. Who would have dreamt a few months ago that he would ever see Persia? The country was but a name; Mesopotamia was but as many another long word of the Bible; Busra was not even a name to him. And yet, here he was, and up to the present all was as a glorified beanfeast, a joy ride, a trip which they actually paid him to take. Dry land was welcome, however, for the cramped smaller vessel reminded all of the joys of free limb movement

—the swinging march again as a pleasure, and not merely as a task. The march was soon to come, spoilt, however, by heat and dust, yet taking them by quaint houses, through groves of palm-trees, by ditches full of piping frogs, by women who turned their faces to the wall as the troops marched by. In a camp of reed huts Halford found himself at his duties, looking after fires and cooking, hunting round for fresh water, laying out blanket beds on the dry ground. Despite the shadow of war more real—for stories of that mysterious Front up the river were many—he could not get the picnic idea out of his mind. There was still so much fun. While the sun shone by day and the moon by night, while trees, frogs, tortoises, mules, camels, Indians, and Arabs seemed all to be assembled there but to add to his pleasures, he could

not but enjoy himself. All the novelties so far had more good points than bad. It was not yet time to repine. In a day or two they would all move up to that Front, either in river boats or by marching. Stores must be laid in, un-necessaries must be left behind. He had his first experience of an Eastern bazaar, its queer mixture of East and West, western goods sold by Arabs and paid for in Indian money. When orders came for the draft to proceed up the river he was ready, and still light-hearted, he made all ready for his own and for Smith's comfort on the voyage. As he stood looking over the side of the river steamer the next morning, watching the palm-trees as they seemed to travel by, Smith repeated his question to him once more.

"Well, Halford, how do you like this?"

"It's *all right*, sir."

II. INTERLUDE.

Halford had done his share of trench-digging for mere practice sake, but as yet he had no experience of the real value of the trench when under fire. He found himself at first in a camp away from the trenches, and could hardly realise that the Turks were not so very far away after all. So flat was all the country that there was no vantage-point from which he could see the enemy, or their position, or anything about them. In the evenings and the morn-

ings our guns opened fire, and he could then see clouds of yellow and black smoke and dust rising in the distance. That, then, must be the position of the Turks' trenches. At night he was sometimes kept awake by the piercing crackle of rifle and machine-gun fire. What a vicious snap there was about the sound of the Turk rifle! It almost made him quake, just at first, to hear the mere sound of this weapon; but he got used to it. No

casualties need be feared here but from the stray bullets of Arab snipers, which found their way through the tents occasionally. For the camp was beyond range, and so comparatively safe. Soon, however, the turn of his battalion for trench duty came, and he went for the first time into that strange maze which in modern war marks the limit beyond which one dare not walk, above which one dare not appear, through which the enemy find it so exceedingly difficult to force their way. Not much sign of these trenches was to be seen until one was almost in them. Halford marched up with his company, and presently found that they were going down a slope into this deeply-cut trench. Soon they were all down below ground-level. This was a main communication trench—a High Street of this half-subterranean town, with its name-boards up, and with the branch streets also named. Some streets were named after India, some after regiments, and more or less parallel to the river was the busy Tigris Street. There was a lull just now, and few were the shots that could be heard, and their bullets must all be passing overhead. The companies found their posts, and settled down to make themselves comfortable. Halford soon began to feel at home. The trench was so deep that he did not expect any missiles to find their way into it. The crackling sounds ceased to have any terrors for

him. He got used to the idea that he was safe as long as he did not put his head over the parapet. He was not curious enough about the Turks to want to look for them at too great a risk. The sentries at their loopholes took some risk, perhaps, but every one had to take his chance of that, and perhaps the Turk snipers would not aim very accurately when it was his turn to keep watch. He was much obsessed by the idea, though, that here was real danger, did one not keep away from it. He did not want to be hurt. He found life too fine to want to give it up. He suffered a good deal when he saw the first men hit by those fatal bullets, and saw death at work too close. Nothing would make him feel these deaths less keenly perhaps. He was too young to grow callous, or to want to do so. But the sense of immediate danger to himself lessened as the days of immunity went by. He began to feel more confident, to regard danger to himself as remote. He would now climb over the bund to get water from the river without dreaming of risk. The early mornings and nights were pleasant, the days were beginning to get unpleasantly hot. For a few days there was little to do, but soon signs of greater activity were seen. Orders came to extend the trench system farther toward the enemy. The work had to be done at night, because the men had to work out in the open in order to dig. Grad-

ually the system took on its new form. Communication trenches zigzagged out, and new lines of defence stretched from the river to the marsh. River on the left and marsh on the right were good safeguards while they kept within their proper bounds, but the snows had now melted, and higher and higher rose the river. It was always a cause for anxiety in the morning, and one had to reassure one's self with the certainty that the bund was still keeping the river back. Rumours of new troops coming up to join the great offensive made the work of extension seem more important, and it was accelerated as much as was possible. In the daytime Halford was chiefly occupied in little jobs for Smith, but there wasn't much to do beyond shaking out a few blankets and getting meals ready. The amount of preparation of meals for which the staples on the menu are bully beef and biscuit is not particularly great. Sitting on the fire-step Halford could dream of the old days before the war, could wonder at the sharp crack as a bullet passed over his head, could try to follow the course of a shell through the air as he followed its sound. Aircraft sometimes manœuvred overhead, causing temporary interest, something to watch for a few moments. Now and then mysterious bodies floated down the river. Nearly every evening a slight thunderstorm visited the area, lightning playing round; it sometimes

seemed as if on all sides at once. The night work progressed steadily, and daylight digging consisted of making square rooms, as it were, to hold the great stores of fresh ammunition which were being brought up, or to act perhaps as shelters for extra men. He enjoyed the sense of excitement and preparation. It would be great to be in at the relief of the beleaguered Kut. He had faint visions of some old pictures of the Relief of Ladysmith seen long ago. He saw all the relieving troops as heroes, and felt the honour of being in their company. When all this preparation was complete, they would move forward, and he — well, he would be all right. The Turks were strangely silent perhaps. It was odd that they did not reply more to our guns, but that they were wide awake he had evidence if any diggers remained exposed after dawn had broken. It was then that he saw men wounded or killed. Pictured as it would be in the eye of him in the aeroplane above, he saw this trench town spread out, gridiron in plan, inset in a plain not quite desert — a plain, green, where undug, with the greenness of new corn never to reach fruition or usefulness. In digging he came across relics of the engagements fought just previous to the occupation of this area — broken shell and empty cartridge, dead Turk scarce buried. Was the opposing scheme of defence like this? He could see, when out in front, outline of barbed wire and fence

some day to be broken through. He could see observation mounds—"pimples," he called them—the sole landmarks.

He was of a party that went away at night to the right of the position to excavate a wide mule trench, that larger stores might be brought up under cover in safety. The Brigadier visiting these works flashed his light too boldly up and down, and immediately a furious volley swept the line, inaccurately indeed, but showing all that every movement on our part was being watched for. One had not to deal with a sleeping foe—and indeed we tended rather to prod him, turn him up, say to him that we were about to startle him with a great shock. He could, indeed, not do otherwise than believe we were bent on advancing. We roared at the Turks with our heavy guns more. Down the river the representatives of the Royal Navy lay looking so strong, sending from their big guns the heavier shells, knocking lumps off the "pimples." Miniature Dreadnoughts they looked, inspiring confidence.

The new troops arrived, and our Samson's battalion had to squeeze up into less space. The dug-outs and side spaces were all full of men, or of ammunition. More guns were at work. For the whole of one morning they played their shrapnel on the enemy barbed wire. It must indeed have been all but destroyed. Posts and stakes leapt into the air.

Every shell passing overhead seemed to stir up waves of excitement, reacting on the brains of our men below, bringing into being that keenness which made them ready, forgetting Death lurking ahead. The few feeble replies, causing only small casualties, gave hope rather than fear. Equipment was all ready, lumber removed, pouches and bandoliers full. Detailed instructions did, as far as was possible under meagre information, give ideas to none too imaginative minds of how and where they were to make their attacks. Yet the "*Vous êtes mes soldats, voilà l'ennemi*" of Henri Quatre was as informative, in effect. Smith found Halford finishing a last letter home before the movement proper. He wondered if the boy gave any indication of his sensations in those few words, the last for many days. But the effect of the letter-writing was largely subjective. Halford saw as he wrote the bright sun shining on the whitewashed cottages down the road, as it had done on the morning he enlisted. He was to be there again some day. It must be so. As he signed his name in full at the end he felt indeed proud of his Israelitish namesake; he felt *his* flush of strength at the lion-slaying; he felt somewhat of the humour expressed in the tied foxes, tail to tail.

Smith looked at him, and remembered.

"Well, Samson, have you that jawbone ready?" said he.

III. "OVER THE GARDEN WALL."

Names other than those expressive of loyalty, such as King's Trench, Queen's Trench, Prince's Trench, did not appear until the front line of all, only a few yards from the Turks, was out out. This, in view of what was to come, inspiration had called Garden Wall, and into this trench went the regiments who were to lead the assault. Congregated here, then, were they to be found; not Halford's division, but one all British. The night was very dark, faint whisper must be the only communication, sign or sound to be none. Those not taking part waited anxiously, all agog, keen to know when and where they would be wanted. What was Johnny Turk's opinion of cold steel now? Most had it that he liked it not, would prefer distance, might indeed leave positions undefended rather than risk that close intimacy generally fatal to many. But wiser ones saw in the elaboration of the defence—time for which had unfortunately been allowed by the smallness of our numbers—a subtler scheme, meant to cause us sore loss, the only thing which could prevent us accomplishing our desired end. Sleep, though they were in full equipment, was permitted to those who, not detailed for this attack, waited in the rearward trenches for their turn to come. A little, indeed, came the way of the combatants themselves, waiting as they were for that

chosen dark hour before the dawn. It is a golden rule to take every opportunity of sleep that offers. Always the next is uncertain.

Faint as the night wind skimming the surface of the hurrying Tigris, the rumour "They have started" was borne back to Halford, now strung up in tensest expectation. "Over the garden wall" the eager attackers were climbing. Not indeed were the assaulters to find the enemy unprepared. Carrying into practice the rules long learnt in pacific rehearsal, they moved swiftly over the level ground; yet, dark as it was, the knowledge of their coming reached Turk ears and eyes, all alert. Now did Halford hear that terrible cracking, merged indeed now into one continuous roar, some bullets too high in flight passing even over his head far far behind their intended billets. Undaunted, yet already leaving comrade after comrade behind on that green corn-field swept by machine-gun fire as by a reaper, the assaulters pressed on. Turk strategy, remembering always the dead level of the ground as their best ally, had left few men in the first two lines, prepared to sacrifice them if necessary, for so the attackers pressing on exposed themselves still more to fire from positions farther away, too far away to be reached by rush of bayonets, however impetuous. So into

these first two lines, often before they could see them, poured our men. Short work they made of occupants already there, survivors soon realising that as prisoners was their only chance of hearing any more of the campaign. Huddled together, these waited for the time to come when they would be passed back unarmed, prisoners to an invader in a country which had once been their own. Line three had been held by more, perhaps, yet these mostly got away in safety, hurrying as those only could who saw or imagined behind that rushing khaki host, edged with gleaming steel, leaping across trench where narrow, leaping into trench where wide and scrambling out on near side, scattering sandbags, losing tens, scores, hundreds, yet pressing on.

On, on, to the next position. But it is too far away; breath is too short; units, scattered now after that first wonderful advance, have not that coherence necessary to carry them on. Range being shorter, Turk riflemen and machine-gunners, now that day has fully broken, cannot miss. It is as though Death, armed with his scythe, stands before them, sweeping the ground with giant strokes. The attackers dig in, even under this fire. But our artillery opening now makes it easier, for the enemy must keep down. Only some of his machine-guns seem immune. Again the news of battle is wafted back to those not yet in it, and thus to Halford.

Does he imagine the scene as it was—the men digging for dear life, as under a fatal hailstorm, friends dropping, pick in hand, at their side, shells whistling and roaring overhead? Never had men blessed the easily worked soil of Mesopotamia as then. Marvellously quick was the whole force in getting under cover. How they blessed the lull! For the first time they could take breath. Though taking note of losses, the flush of success lifted them, dominant still over all other emotions. To the mind of an Army success is as wine.

Commanders hastened to make use of this high spirit while it still displayed itself. Only the most meagre necessities in the way of food could these men get in this new position, so suddenly won. Yet they waited but for darkness to come again before making another advance. Reorganised as completely as possible, they rose up then, re-formed, and repeated the performance of the morning. What though the darkness prevented any aiming on the part of the foe! Here there was no need of aiming, for they had only to fire weapons horizontally a little above ground-level and some one was certain to be hit by their bullets. So though again many fell under fire by the way, though they tumbled often into the trenches before they could see them, though they could not tell foe from friend, yet they took the position, and in the last lines

of it they stayed, well satisfied with their work.

Hard at work, too, all that night, had been the ambulances, bringing in those who had been wounded early in the morning. Halford had watched many of these brought by, fear trying hard to get a place in his mind, his boy's heart more than a little on the tremor, lest he, too, would be soon like them. Yet present safety held him cheerful, not seeing danger too soon. The wounded, too, seemed generally to regard themselves as the favoured ones, fortunately out of it, making light of their sufferings. Carried away to the dressing-stations, field-ambulances, clearing-stations, they found themselves getting at least just so much comfort as gave them to think of more following, careful treatment of their case when the rush was over. Days of pain there might be, unpleasant voyages down river on poorly equipped boats; yet as the time went they knew no more harm could come to them, discomforts were bound to decrease rather than increase, down the river their case would be handed to care of real nurses, blessing indeed.

So a day of no fighting went by. As much as was possible those wounded were removed, but many remained fallen in awkward places, unable to be reached as yet. Yet, as we possessed the ground, the time would come for those also. Bustle of action now passed through Halford's division. He heard from Smith that their turn

had come. They were to pass through the two captured positions and attack the third position very, very early the next morning. At evening, then, they were ready. He adjusted Smith's equipment, saw that all he wanted was in its place. His fingers trembled a little, try to hide it though he did. The sights of the last two days had been too unnerving for that. Sight of blood was still to him a thing terrible, however gloriously spilt. He kept as close to Smith as he could. The battalions moved out of their safety, and in the darkness marched forward, following guides, to the front of the captured positions, where they were to await the word to advance and assault that third position, more terrible than either of the others, more strongly held with more intention of resolute defence, the enemy now thoroughly prepared and full of determination fierce as our own. Halford trudged on through the blackness. The day had been fiercely hot, but a breeze now had that quality it could only have through coming over water. The marsh on the right was rising and extending. The night had an eerie quality of expectation, aided by dotted lights here and there behind as the rescue of wounded still proceeded, and by howls of darkness-loving beasts. Was it a night like this, thought Halford, when the great Samson had gone out and carried off the gates of Gaza

alone? He also then must not be dismayed. The movements of the troops forward to the position from which the attack was to be launched were marked by the inevitable accompaniments of night work: stumblings, slow progress, waiting for communication to be ensured, difficulties increased many times on this occasion by the way in which the ground had been out up, by the uncertainty of the river as a guide, by the varying boundary of the marsh. So daylight was upon them before they emerged at their final starting-off place. The Eastern sun, in league with the Turk, betrayed them to their enemy; and with the rising of that fatal sun it was seen that the river and the marsh had both risen against them too. When the battalions essayed to deploy into the formations allotted on estimates based on what the ground had been like a few days before, they found it impossible. On the right the marsh, spread over a much greater area than before, thrust the men more and more towards the centre, hundreds forced into it wading almost to their waists. On the left, the river bund, broken by artillery fire or by the retreating Turks, had let in another flood, forcing the left wing also inwards, drenching all flank men there. At the same instant, it seemed, of this fatal discovery, the Turks also discovered them and opened a terrible fire. The division, though caught by both fire and water, pressed on. Halford, wading up to his knees, holding

his rifle high, pushed on with the others. He heard Smith's voice in front, but then lost sight of him. His boots stuck in the muddy bottom of the marsh. The men could not develop a speedy rush on ground like this. He saw the men on either side of him reel, and heard them fall with a sullen splash into the water, deep enough to cover them. The flying bullets spattered into the water like hailstones. He was utterly bewildered by the roar of rifle, machine-gun, and artillery, and by the cries of the wounded and the struggles of the drowning. But he dragged his wet feet forward, making for a slight elevation, an island rising a foot or two in front. He had just reached a dry space when his right leg suddenly broke down, and he fell on his face. For a moment or two he lay there, recovering breath. Then he turned over and, sitting up a little, examined his leg. A bullet had hit him below the knee. He saw the blood soaking through his puttee, but he did not want to touch it, and a bullet hitting the ground an inch or two away startled him; he flung himself flat again, feeling safer. In that brief moment of sitting, though, he had seen how many had fallen like himself. He supposed the rest were still pushing on. A yard or two away lay a body. Looking at it without raising his head, he saw that it was Russell of his platoon. His own leg was now hurting dreadfully, and as he saw the stream of blood slowly crawl-

ing towards him from Russell's body, he felt suddenly terribly sick, fought against it for a moment, and then fainted away. The sun, laughing at the trick he and the waters had played on us, rose higher and higher, prepared for new cruelties.

A few hours later Halford stirred, brought back to life by a raging thirst. His mouth and eyes felt horrible. He moved his hand weakly across his face, disturbing crowds of flies. Bah, they were crawling into his mouth. He spat them out and again drove them away with his hand. Fortunately his topee had not fallen off. Secured by the chin-strap, it was still covering his head. He gasped for water. Yes, his water-bottle was still there. He struggled with the fastenings, and was presently able to get it to his mouth. Though but warm Tigris water in the bottle, it was life to him. He dragged himself a yard or two. How hot the sun was! And would he never be able to keep off these buzzing flies? The blood-stains on his clothes and on the ground were black with them. He wondered when the stretcher-bearers would find him. He could not see any about. He tried to fix his rifle upright, the bayonet stuck in the ground, as a sign, and at last he managed to do it. There did not seem to be so much firing going on now. He drank a little more water, and then lay there in a sort of half stupor. The heat seemed to paralyse him.

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When he had raised his head the dancing mirage had prevented him from getting any clear sight of anything. How everything glared! He had as a last idea a vague notion of an aeroplane somewhere above buzzing noisily. Then nightmare dreams seized him. He had an impression that he was back in the mine, a heavy fall of coal had crushed his leg, the way of escape was cut off, and he was left behind. Other confused dreams followed, and then he ceased to dream once more.

When he came back to consciousness it was quite dark. He had an idea that something had roused him by touching him, yet he did not know what it could be. He could see nothing at first. He lay and listened. Wild howlings and barkings could be heard, with now and again yells of horrid laughter. This latter drew nearer. Halford still lay there, shaking. What animals were these, abroad among the dead? Presently he heard the splash, splash of one of these beasts paddling through the water. He felt it coming quite close. It sniffed round him, and then he heard the sucking noise of its tongue as it licked the blood on Russell's body. Opening his eyes an instant he saw a black outline—half pig, half dog—against the night sky. The beast turned towards him, sniffing again at his face. How filthy its breath smelt! In horror he started up, and the animal sprang back two or three paces. Just at that instant

there was a shout, and a light appeared not far away. The hyena threw up its head and let out one more terrific laugh, and then trotted off to a new victim. Halford raised himself and stared at the light. Would it come nearer? Yes, it certainly did. He heard a voice shout, "Is there any one there?" and heard other voices muttering. He tried to make some sort of a noise in reply, but could scarcely speak. But the light still came on, and the voice cried again, "Who is there?" It was Smith's voice, and Halford managed a faint "Here, sir," to his call. Then they came: two stretcher-bearers and Smith with his arm in a sling, looking for him. He showed them where he was hurt; he was put on the stretcher and carried off. A feeling of great relief and ease came over him. He was safe among friends, and would soon be put right. The Turks had not got him, nor the wild beasts, nor had the sun much injured him. They gave him another drink, and moved off toward our lines.

There was no firing now, but the jackals and hyenas still prowled, howling. Just for a few moments a sort of moving picture of the last few months passed before Halford's mind,—the voyage out, the preparations, the events of yesterday. What a strange thing one's share in a war sometimes was! Long months of preparation, so much time in which one did not seem to be injuring the enemy at all, then a chance of real action,—a flash,—and here was one laid aside again, who knows for how long. Perhaps the problem was not to him as definite as that, yet he felt that there was something odd about his experience. Now, however, he was content.

Smith walked by the side of the stretcher. Presently he said, "I'm so glad I found you, Halford. How do you feel now?" If he could have seen the boy's face then he would have caught a faint glimpse of the old sunshine, which showed, indeed, in the whispered answer, "I'm all right, sir."

ORTONIAN.

A PRISONER OF WAR.

I.

THE German Emperor has, since the beginning of the war, professed himself a follower of Napoleon. He has imitated the vices of that great man with sedulous care, though, of course, the great man's genius has remained far beyond his reach. And in nothing has he shown himself an apter pupil than in the deliberate cruelty wherewith he has treated his prisoners of war. The brutal outrages which Napoleon inflicted upon his helpless captives will always seem the darkest of the many stains which time will never wash from his name and fame. The man, who enslaved those of his enemies who fell into his hands, or enrolled them in his own armies, that they might fight against their kith and kin, deserves no absolution from a complacent posterity. The ghosts of the six thousand wretched Spaniards who died from exhaustion on the road between Saragossa and the Pyrenees, or were shot because they could not keep up with their comrades, will haunt Napoleon's memory until the end of time. Nor shall we ever forget or forgive the indignities put upon Englishmen—most of them civilians trapped after the cessation of the truce signed at Amiens—at Verdun, Bitché, and Givet. To torture the helpless and afflicted is not the deed of a

hero, and until the Kaiser, in all the vulgarity of his Prussian nature, improved upon the lesson taught by Napoleon, at Ruhleben, at Sennelager, at a dozen other infernos, the sinister reputation of Napoleon stood alone.

And as the Kaiser will bear the full blame for the atrocities which he bade his officers to perpetrate, so Napoleon must be condemned as the only begetter of the miseries and sufferings borne by his prisoners and captives. Before he seized revolutionary France by the throat, and shook her into an efficient autocracy, cruelty and outrage were no part of her settled policy. Such sailors as fell, by the fortune of war, into the hands of the French, were treated with some show of kindness and humanity. Not even the fierce temper of Robespierre carried his countrymen so far on the road of severity as the frigid, calculating malignity of Napoleon. Witnesses of this truth are not wanting, and there lately fell into my hands the manuscript story of a returned prisoner, who celebrates with what eloquence he can the humanity and benevolence of the French people. The manuscript is remarkable for not a few reasons. It is a veritable masterpiece of calligraphy. The author believed that his adventures were so well worth remembering,

that he set them down with all the care and skill where-with the scribes of old immortalised their thoughts before the black art of printing was invented. And as the books of Gutenberg and Fust owed their style and character to the manuscripts which went before them, so the written record of this prisoner and artist was so closely modelled upon the printed books of his time, that the accuracy of his hand often deceives the reader's eye. But his work is especially interesting because it was designed to correct a false impression. Since his return to his native land, he tells us, he has "heard the most glaring falsehoods basely fabricated by seamen and others for the purpose of exciting pity for themselves." So he celebrates

frankly the amiability of his captors, admitting, like the wise man that he is, certain exceptions. "When discipline," says he, "loses its influence over the minds of men, they do not hesitate to commit the worst of excesses." He did not foresee the excesses which Napoleon's iron discipline would achieve. He dedicates his book, with all sincerity, and in an ornate page, "to a people equally conspicuous in history for their private virtues as well as their public vices: to a nation that, whilst disavowing the Christian faith, still practised in an eminent degree the first of Christian duties, charity and benevolence." And he adds the appropriate epigraph: "I was an hungered, and they gave me meat: naked, and they clothed me."

II.

G. M.—such are his initials—was, in 1794, a midshipman on board the *Scout*, which, after the evacuation of Toulon, sailed with the fleet under Lord Hood, to take possession of Corsica. The capture of Bastia, the short-lived triumph of "liberty," the exultant speech of Paoli, mere episodes in a well-packed history, find no place in G. M.'s record. It is more to his purpose that soon after Corsica became, for a few months only, a part of the British Empire, the Corsican merchants asked the protection of a vessel of war for their ships employed in the coral-fishing off the coast of Egypt. This duty fell upon the *Scout*, which,

taking on board four months' provisions and extra seamen, sailed from Ajaccio on the 18th of July 1794, with thirty or forty large fishing-boats belonging to the island. It left Corsica "accompanied by the best wishes of a vast concourse of people," and from Sardinia steered for the coast of Barbary, intending to make Tunis, but it was compelled to take shelter in the harbour of Bona, and there it remained until the 3rd of August. On the following day those on board desoried two strange frigates, which should have given them no trouble at all, for the *Scout* had the weather gauge, and was a "prime sailer." More-

over, it was some seven or eight miles away, and when the captain ordered all hands to shorten sail, he gave the order without the assent of a single officer. And the captain did still worse, for he spoke with the frigates, which hauled down the Spanish flag they were flying and ran up the tricolour, and then surrendered without striking a blow. Some ships of the convoy escaped, others fell into the hands of the French, and it is some satisfaction to know that the Captain of the *Scout* was severely censured.¹

Thus G. M. began the hardships of a prisoner's life — hardships which he bore with both the courage and buoyancy of his sixteen years, and which he mitigated with the determined hope of escape. The journey to Toulon gave him no earnest of better times to come. Captain Landrie, of *La Vestale*, one of his captors, was a "despicable wretch," who kept his prisoners all night in the hold, and in whom "republican" frenzy had risen to such a height, that it closely bordered on idolatry. In other words, he compelled the worship of a clumsily-carved image which stood upon the quarter-deck, and which was intended to represent the goddess Liberty. Still worse, he robbed his English cap-

tives of all their goods, with a promise of restoration, and gave G. M. no more than a wretched *assignat* of 10 livres for sixty yards of the best linen that could be bought in Dublin! Then the prisoners set forth on the wearisome march from Toulon to Gap, which was to be the place of their imprisonment. G. M., acutely sensitive to the beauty of the landscape, records with pleasure his first view of "the majestic Alps," and moreover found solace during his journey in the humours of the road and the sympathy of the inhabitants. At Le Val, in the Department of the Var, he was invited to breakfast with some French soldiers, who proved their love of equality and fraternity by refusing to pay the bill. "We please to give you nothing," said they to the landlord, "unless you choose to accept payment from the points of our swords." As for G. M., he regretted that he had not the talents of a Hogarth to depict the features of "this shrivelled burlesque upon Boniface." His good fortune attended him to Digne in the Basses Alpes, where he was billeted upon a family of considerable note, who treated him as though he had been a long-lost son, and where General Petit Guillaume, who inspected the prisoners, told them they had nothing to fear,

¹ G. M. is careful not to give the Captain's name. "I am induced through motives of respect, as well as delicacy," he writes, "to suppress the name of the Commander of the *Scout*, having lately had the pleasure of waiting upon him at his house in the village of Bishop's Waltham, in Hampshire." History, which has neither regret nor delicacy, records that the Commander's name was Charles Robinson.

as the miscreant Robespierre was no more.

Arrived at Gap, which was destined for their dépôt, they were told the laws, by no means onerous, which should govern their imprisonment. They were free to range the streets until dark, so long as they did not leave the town, nor discuss politics, nor go about more than four together. Life in Gap might have been easy enough, especially for those who, like G. M., engaged themselves with the citizens as helpers to gather in the vintage. But freedom being always pleasanter than comfort, G. M. straightway set about attempting to escape. There were several reasons why success did not seem beyond his reach. He had a perfect knowledge of the French tongue, and his friends at Gap, inspired by hatred of the National Government, assured him that an attempt was not impracticable. Alas! it was on April 1st, 1795, that he started upon his first adventure, and a veritable fool's errand it proved. His hope was to tramp to Barcellonnette, and then to reach Piedmont through a pass in the Alps. Barcellonnette he gained without mishap, and then found that the pass was so closely guarded by French soldiers, that progress by that road was impossible. "Thus disappointed"—I will carry on the narrative in his own words—"I proceeded a few miles up the Durance, where I was told I might procure a boat to ferry me over. I had the mortification, however, to find the

boatman an inflexible, flinty-hearted rascal, who, notwithstanding that I endeavoured to allure him with a 3-livre piece, refused to have anything to do with me, as I was not furnished with a passport. After cursing the miscreant by my gods, I determined upon fording the river, and accordingly proceeded up its margin a considerable distance in order to find out a convenient spot. Having, as I thought, discovered this, I lost no time in preparing to wade across, when suddenly, to my utter consternation, four peasants (such, at least, I conceived them to be) observing me in the act of stripping off my clothes, rushed upon me, and without the least previous ceremony decorated my wrists with a pair of handcuffs. . . . I was by them conducted to a small Bourg, called *Largentière*, and immediately ushered before the *Maire*, who endeavoured (and I am sorry to say succeeded) to intimidate me by his cavalier-like behaviour. According to his verdict, I was either to be shot or suffer decapitation by the guillotine; or at least, as an act of mercy, to be sent to the galleys at Toulon during life. The merciless democrat paid no attention whatever to an inscription over his head, which set forth that 'all men are equal,' but kept me standing, bare-headed, for upwards of half an hour, whilst thundering his denunciations against me. The sight of the national cockade, which I wore in my hat, added fresh fuel to his wrath, and he immediately ordered

me to divest myself of a badge which none but Republicans had a right to wear. I lost no time in obeying this mandate, and inwardly stung with resentment at such unworthy treatment, I threw the bauble into the fireplace. This act was construed into an insult by the *Maire*, who, giving free scope to his resentment, clenched his fist at me in all the phrenzy of ungovernable rage. At last, having regained the faculty of speech, the *pseudo* distributor of justice ordered me to be shut up in the *cachôt*, or dungeon, there to make atonement for my crimes. Figure to yourself, gentle reader, a youth of 16 years of age, trembling before an ill-looking wretch, who, unmoved at the terror which his diabolical visage naturally inspired, loaded him with a torrent of abuse, intermixed with the most appalling threats."

Such was G. M.'s worst encounter, and it is not sur-

prising that fear overcame him. Yet he speedily recovered his balance, and adds to his narrative a characteristic footnote. "I beg leave to assure the reader," he writes, "in the most solemn manner, that this was the first and last time that ever I felt intimidated at the sight of a Frenchman." Nor did the *cachôt* have any terrors for him, since no sooner was he shut up in the jail than the good-natured jailer told him that his company was requested at the Inn by four citizens, who wished him to sup with them. The four citizens turned out to be the fellows who had arrested him on the banks of the Durace, now uniformed as *gens d'armes*. They gave him an excellent supper, and after the bottle had "circulated freely," the jailer forgot all about the *cachôt*, and bade his prisoner pass the night comfortably at the Inn.

III.

And so on the morrow he was sent back to Gap, where the Commissary asked him what punishment he thought he deserved. "In my opinion," replied G. M., seldom at a loss, "one minute in the presence of the Mayor of Largentière was more than an adequate punishment for any crime that I could possibly commit." What could the Commissary do but smile? What could G. M. do but resolve to atone for his "unsuccessful cruize" by a better, wiser attempt in the future? Nor was the

better attempt long in coming. In July he set out for Marseilles without money, even without boots, in the hope of passing for an American, and obtaining a passage from France in a vessel belonging to that nation. How did he live on the journey? "I made no scruple," says he, "to declare my real situation to the inhabitants of the country, whom I knew to be extremely inimical to the existing Government. I became confirmed in this opinion wherever I presented myself,

obtaining both food and lodging, with occasionally a supply of money. 'I strongly suspect you to be one of my own countrymen,' observed an old gentleman from whom I craved relief, 'otherwise I would willingly assist you.' I succeeded in convincing him of the truth of my assertions, and experienced a most cordial welcome." Whenever he was molested, it was always because he was taken for a deserter from the French army. Thus he had no difficulty in arriving at Marseilles, and had it not been for an accidental meeting with a policeman in a café he would have made his way on an American snow to Malaga. But once more he found himself a prisoner, and was sent back to Gap, humiliated yet not in despair.

In 1796, having obtained some money from his agent in Leghorn, he determined to pay Paris a visit, and thence to find his way to some port in the north of France. "A citizen of Gap," thus he tells his own story, "whose goodwill exceeded his discretion, was my sole adviser, and I lost no time in preparing for this quixotic excursion. In order to avoid suspicion, I sallied forth without any luggage, and towards nightfall arrived at a delightful village, called Lesdigières, situate on the small river Drac." So he came to Grenoble, and after a short stay in this city, "I proceeded," thus he continues, "towards Lyons. . . . When within a few minutes of Lyons, I espied 9 or 10 gendarmes

advancing towards me, in company with a considerable body of people on foot. It would have been highly imprudent had I attempted to elude them by having recourse to my heels. I therefore prevented their suspicion by the following stratagem: When within a few yards of them, I very carelessly climbed up a willow-tree, and, whilst whistling a French national air, pretended to be very busy in cutting a staff. The gendarmes passed me, after the hackneyed observation 'that the weather was fine.' The people on foot proved to be about an hundred deserters or conscripts, handcuffed two by two. I shouted 'Vive la République!' and confirmed them in the opinion that I was a true sans-culotte. I regret that it is not in my power to do justice, by any description, to the truly magnificent city of Lyons. At a distance, it has the appearance of an amphitheatre, consisting chiefly of superb buildings, whilst the majestic Rhône is seen rolling its lucid wave through an extensive and fruitful valley. . . . Perceiving a number of troops in this city, I did not consider myself safe within its walls, and, notwithstanding the evening was far advanced, I pursued my journey towards Macon. Night, however, soon came on, and, unable to reach a place of public entertainment, I quitted the high road in order to crave a lodging at a large mansion, which I observed at a distance. It was with the utmost difficulty that I reached this castle, for such its appearance bespoke

it to be, owing to the darkness of the night, and the very intricate road which led thereto. Having expressed my wants to a servant, I was immediately ushered into a splendid saloon, where I had not waited many minutes ere an elderly gentleman made his appearance, who, with the utmost affability, welcomed me to Chateau-Vallon. When I gave him to understand that I was an Englishman, his joy appeared to be boundless, and, embracing me with all the warmth of a genuine friendship, he kindly invited me to partake of supper in company with his family. Our repast consisted of various luxuries, seasoned by the agreeable conversation of his daughters, who, with their worthy father, endeavoured to render my visit as pleasant as possible to me. After supper, I found an excellent bed prepared for me; and on the following morning I prosecuted my journey, impressed with sentiments of the most lively gratitude towards my kind entertainer."

Nor were food and lodging the only favours bestowed upon G. M. by his benefactor of Chateau-Vallon. When he awoke the next morning he found a clean shirt and two pairs of stockings stuffed into one of the pockets of his coat! Truly adventures are to the adventurous, and thus the escaped prisoner came, through Dijon, Troyes, and Provins, to the very gates of Paris itself. Never had he seen the French capital before, and what befell him there might well have come from

the pages of a contemporary novel. "At my arrival at this metropolis," he writes in the stilted style of his century, "I determined to indulge my curiosity in viewing such objects as were deemed worthy of observation, and having about an hundred livres in my purse (£4, 3s. 4d.) I soon procured a guide, or rather companion, who undertook to show me everything which was to be seen for or without money, *dans la plus belle ville au monde*. This companion was *un garçon boulanger*, or baker's boy, out of place; and consequently as idle and famished as was necessary to assist me in exhausting my finances. After refreshing ourselves with some *bière de Mars*, a very disagreeable beverage, fully as frothy as the Parisians themselves, we repaired to the public *Ménagerie*, where I saw lions, tigers, elephants, &c., for nothing! From thence we took an external view of the Tuileries, drank some more *bière de Mars*, for which, of course, I paid, and again sallied forth in quest of novelties. Nothing but my extreme youth, and consequent indifference to the future, could have induced me to give a loose to pleasure, in the capital of an enemy's dominions; and I humbly trust the indulgent reader will make this allowance in my favour."

Indeed, the indulgent reader will make every allowance for a boy of seventeen, who has walked from Gap to Paris through a country which should have been hostile, and who sees Paris for the first

time. But assuredly the *garçon boulanger* was an error of judgment. "I at last began to grow tired of my associate," says G. M., "to whom I had previously discovered myself (without, however, acknowledging that I was a prisoner of war), and who frequently irritated me by his opinions concerning the French Revolution. Whilst I regaled this cormorant at my own expense, he sought every opportunity to rouse my temper by his empty boastings that his countrymen were preparing to invade England, observing with a sneer that I ought to remain in Paris until the expedition set out, when I would be found serviceable in showing them the road to London. Although I was willing to attribute his behaviour to the liberal draughts of beer which he had swallowed, yet his pointed insults got the better of my forbearance, and without further ceremony I kicked him out of the room."

A high-spirited Englishman could do no less, and yet the baker's boy had his revenge, and speedily played the spy upon him. "After ridding myself of my companion," thus writes the ingenuous G. M., "I sallied forth in search of a lodging for the night, and in a short space of time I found one to my purpose in the Rue du Bac, Faubourg St Germain. Just as I was seating myself to supper, the door was suddenly opened by my landlady, who introduced a fellow to me, the sight of whom deprived me of all appetite. His height was upwards of six feet, whilst

the lower part of his face was entirely covered by a pair of enormous mustaches, through which appeared a set of very regular teeth, happily contrasted with the filthy excrescence which shaded his mouth. After many preliminary apologies for intruding at such an unseasonable hour, he very politely inquired my name, profession, &c., to all which I answered with due regard to my own safety. '*C'est bon,*' said he, 'but I request to see your passport.' This unexpected demand quite disconcerted me, and I was under the necessity of declaring myself to be without one. '*Comment fichtre! point de passeport!*' exclaimed this bear upon two legs. '*Tu iras en prison des l'instant.*' So saying, he very expertly disengaged my chair of its burden, and without suffering me to taste one morsel of my supper (for which I confess I had but little appetite), hurried me before the Intendant of the Police, who, after many threats, succeeded in extorting a confession from me. At this declaration, his deportment assumed a milder character; and observing me to be exceedingly agitated, he very condescendingly ordered me a chair, and presented me with a glass of excellent wine, in order to recruit my spirits. 'I cannot suffer you to remain in Paris,' said he, 'nor can I allow you to proceed to the North. I shall therefore cause you to be conducted back to Gap, with a recommendatory letter, in order to screen you from further pun-

ishment.' So saying, he remanded me to my lodgings, in company with a policeman, who, notwithstanding many protestations that he could not eat anything at such an advanced hour, assisted me to

dispatch my supper; and out of the goodwill which he said he bore to my countrymen, drank several bumpers to their health, which he did me the honour of ordering to my account!"

IV.

The next day began the return journey to Gap under an escort, which was changed daily, and G. M.'s disappointment was not mitigated by thirty days' imprisonment, with bread and water for his only fare, and by the bitter news that during his absence the crew of the *Scout* had been exchanged by cartel. After a weary winter spent in cutting wood in the mountains of Montmort, he was given a passport for Toulon, where he hoped fondly that he might embark on board of a cartel. At Toulon he formed an attachment "of the tenderest nature," which made these days of his captivity "the happiest of his life." Alas! the object of his affections was untimely snatched from him, and after a long sojourn in the hospital he petitioned the Commissary at War, in the spring of 1798, to allow him to return to the interior, where he would enjoy a fuller liberty. The Commissary gave him a passport to Vienne, in the department of the Isère, a dépôt exclusively reserved for Austrian prisoners. Here were the seeds of future embarrassment, which were rendered no less fruitful by the Commissary's misspelling of G. M.'s name. And G. M. himself, not sufficiently cunning, made an erasure to correct

the spelling, and henceforth was an object of suspicion wherever he went. However, he set out with a light heart, and once more passed Brignolles, where one Citizen Le Brun invited him to dinner, and gave him the soundest advice for the future. His generosity was great, as his mansion was elegant, and it is thus that G. M. describes his entertainment: "During the preparation for dinner," he writes, "Citizen Le Brun conducted me to his Library, where I beheld a considerable collection of well-chosen books in the modern languages, which convinced me that he was a man of taste and literature. I observed an elegant painting of Louis XVI. suspended over the door, and remarking that I paid much attention to it, he said, '*C'est le portrait de mon ancien Maître.*' He appeared, however, suddenly to recollect himself, and without allowing me time to reply, invited me to a walk in the garden. 'I understand,' said he, 'that your countrymen are excellent gardeners. I wish you to send me one over when you return to England.' I smiled at the jest, and held my peace. . . . After dinner, being left to ourselves, he observed to me, that as he had conceived a

friendly interest in my behalf, he wished me to acquaint him in what manner he might be serviceable to me. 'The municipal officers,' said he, 'have formed some unfavourable ideas with respect to you, and as the Mayor of this City, I ought to enquire into the cause why an alteration took place in your name upon the face of your passport; yet I cannot exercise this part of my duty without acting against my feelings. Unfold yourself therefore to me, without reserve, and rely upon my protection. *Avouez*—confess that you wish to effect your escape.' These last words were uttered in a manner so replete with sincerity and honour that I without hesitation related to him the various, though unsuccessful, attempts which I had made in order to regain my liberty; and with tears, the most eloquent pleaders I could summon, entreated him to favour me with that protection which he so humanely promised. '*Nous verrons*,' said he; and we finished our bottle without resuming the subject for that time."

"After dark," thus the story goes on, "M. Le Brun left me to my own reflections, and in the course of two hours returned with an invitation to accompany him *au café*, where having arrived I was by him introduced to several gentlemen, who appeared to have been playing at billiards. The Mayor, presenting me with a purse of money, said with a smile, 'Here is the produce of our evening's pastime, which these citizens, to whom I have related your history, desire me

to offer in their name.' I accepted the present with gratitude, and my silence sufficiently proved how much I was impressed by such generous treatment. What a contrast between the Mayor of Brignolles and the ferocious tiger at Largentière! On our return home M. Le Brun conducted me into his study, where, producing a large map of Europe, he carefully traced out the road to Geneva. 'This will be the most effectual route for you to try your escape,' said he; 'contrive to travel with your passport as far as Vienne, when afterwards you will carefully avoid making yourself known, and by passing for one of our countrymen endeavour to reach the borders of Switzerland. To-morrow evening we will collect some more money for you, and in the meantime you will remain concealed under my roof for fear of the military.' I thanked him, retired to rest, and on the following day experienced a renewal of friendship and goodwill from this benevolent man. Evening came. I accompanied him to the coffee-house, received another supply of money, and retired early to bed, purposing to set out next morning by break of day. My worthy benefactor conducted me to my chamber, where, presenting me with two shirts, two pairs of stockings, and a pair of shoes, he observed they would prove serviceable to me on my journey. Reader! if ever thou hast experienced the many ills attendant on poverty, or the irreparable loss of friends in thy native country,

then may'st thou judge what I felt at kindness so unexpected!"

It is easy to excuse the boy's apostrophe. The generosity of M. Le Brun and his friends, which savoured of the antique world, might have moved to enthusiasm a heart of stone. And G. M. set out upon his last journey through France with a lively sense of gratitude. Once more he passed by Gap, his ancient home, took leave of his friends there, and then from Grenoble reached Valence, a town of some importance on the Rhône. There he was arrested as a deserter, and through the unhappy erasure on his passport was charged with being in possession of false papers. For thirty-six days he lay in a filthy jail, among thieves and other malefactors, and at last being set free, he made his way to Vienne, the destination marked upon his passport. The Commissary for prisoners at Vienne refused to have anything to do with him, as he was not an Austrian, and the municipality would have ordered him back to Toulon had he not taken French leave of it, and found the road to Chambéry early next morning, with a cockade stuck jauntily in his hat. Not far from Chambéry he stopped to drink at a cabaret, and taking the landlord into his confidence, told him who he was and whither he was bent, and even asked him by which road he would run the least hazard of

encountering the *gendarmérie*. "I do not think," said the landlord, stroking his chin, "that you run much risk in pursuing the high road to Geneva, since by your not carrying any luggage, no person will suppose you to be a traveller. Yet ere I suffer you to depart, allow me to bestow upon you a piece of very salutary advice, namely, that in your future intercourse with strangers, you will be less lavish of your secrets, for *entre nous*, I myself am a *gens d'arme*." No wonder the swiftly repentant G. M. was alarmed at what might have been the consequence of his folly. "I verily believe," he writes, "that Hamlet, upon the sudden appearance of his father's ghost, did not wear an aspect more fraught with horror than that which I assumed at a declaration so dreadful and unexpected. The glass escaped from my palsied fingers, and, with jaws extended, I gazed upon the equally confounded landlord, unable to utter a syllable!" Hastily he urged the landlord not to betray him, and for the second time was properly reproved by the Frenchman. "Your ideas of a Frenchman," said he, "must be very unfavourable, if you can for a moment imagine that after being made your confidant I should be so base as to take advantage of your want of reserve. Go! you have nothing to apprehend! but remember well my advice."

V.

And now he arrived at the last, and by no means the

easiest, stage of his great adventure. He approached

the beautiful city of Geneva; his heart throbbed at the prospect of freedom; and then once more the dice of fate were thrown against him. "In passing a drawbridge," he says, "which led to the city, I became appalled at the sight of a French sentinel, who, notwithstanding, suffered me to proceed. I shortly afterwards found myself within the walls of Geneva, which, on account of its being a neutral city, protected me from being claimed as an enemy. . . . I pursued my journey along the margin of the lake, the bells of Coppet (the first Swiss town) ringing, as I thought, a welcome peal. A sudden shower of rain coming on, I hastened towards a village in order to procure shelter, and, on my arrival, entered the first place of entertainment I beheld. I had not been seated many minutes, before a French officer, apparently the head of a guard, made his appearance, and informed me that he had seen me entering the town, and concluding I was a traveller proceeding to Switzerland, he, as became his duty, required a sight of my passport, without which no person was permitted to enter the country." In vain G. M. protested, in defiance of the truth, that he was a native of Geneva. The Frenchman was certain that he was an Austrian, and handed him over promptly to General Kellermann, destined in two brief years to be the hero of Marengo. To Carrouge, therefore, he was taken, the General's headquarters, and after

being kept waiting for two hours, found himself face to face with the hero. "At last," he tells us, "an officer, clad in the most sumptuous manner *à la Hussar*, entered the hall, and with the greatest affability accosted me in the English language with 'How do you do?' His polite and unrestrained behaviour not only divested me of all fear, but likewise of my presence of mind, and I immediately returned the compliment in the same language. 'I was thoroughly convinced,' said General Kellermann, resuming the discourse in French, 'that you were an Englishman, and I rejoice that your candour has prevented me from resorting to certain measures in order to obtain the truth from you, which would be extremely repugnant to my feelings. But what do you intend to do?' added he with apparent concern. 'I cannot suffer you to enter the Swiss Territory, neither do I wish to send you back to Toulon, as in that case I would be subjecting you to punishment.' After some consideration it was decreed that I should be furnished by him with a passport for the city of Lille in Flanders, where upon my arrival I was to wait upon the British Ambassador, who, it was supposed, would procure me a passage to England. I shuddered at the idea of so long a journey, and determined within myself to make one struggle more ere I gave up the contest. Hereupon the General summoned the secretary, and ordered him to make out a passport for

Lille, himself dictating the contents. Willing to evince a sense of good breeding, the General asked me what was the English word for *Monsieur*. As I could not anticipate his motives for such a question, especially as I was absorbed in reflection, I without hesitation made answer that it was *Sir*. Judge of my surprise when, upon receiving my passport from the hands of the secretary, I read the following words: 'Permettez au porteur, Sir G. M., de passer de Carrouge jusqu'à Lille en Flandres.' Thus was I unexpectedly created a knight, and I firmly believe that a more ragged one was never dubbed."

Thus General Kellermann proved the same thoughtful benevolence as the other Frenchmen whom G. M. encountered on his road. Not merely did he give the wanderer a passport, but he slipped two louis d'or into his hand as he wished him farewell. But it was no part of G. M.'s plan to make his way across France to Lille on foot, and therefore on leaving Carrouge he turned back towards Bonneville, and taking refuge once more in a *cabaret*, he let his confidence get the better of him again, and told the landlord his hope and purpose. The offer of a hundred guineas, if only he were in Switzerland, persuaded the landlord to do what he could for him. "After some moments spent in deep reflection," writes G. M., "during which he scratched his head with as much violence as if he had been visited by

one of the seven plagues of Pharaoh, he exclaimed, '*Sacré Dieu! c'est dommage*,' and the portentous exclamation thrice escaped his lips at regular intervals. At last he informed me of what I knew already—viz., that I had taken a wrong step in endeavouring to enter the Swiss dominions by land, since no person was allowed any communication with that country by the French Government. He therefore advised me to return with all possible haste to Geneva, ere the gates were shut, and that he would charge me with a letter to his brother, who was the master of a boat, and who would upon his recommendations give me a passage across the lake to Coppet."

So once more the prisoner turned his face towards Geneva, escaped the scrutiny of Carrouge, and reached the gates of the friendly city just as the guards were about to secure the drawbridge. "After many inquiries," thus the narrative continues, "I found out the boatman, who kept a small public-house in a very obscure part of the city, and who told me I should be perfectly welcome to quarters and entertainment until the morning, when he would give me a passage to Coppet. Accordingly, at an early hour, I was awakened by the landlord, who conducted me to the boat, and with a laudable precaution secreted me under a large quantity of loose cabbages, in order to elude the search of the *douaniers*, who, so soon as the boat arrived at a certain point of the quay, came on board and

commenced a partial search. Nothing being found liable to seizure, the only contraband goods being myself, the vessel was permitted to depart, and in the course of a few minutes I ventured to thrust my head through the cabbages, and observed that we were in the middle of the lake. I found two male passengers on board, who appeared rather surprised at seeing me emerge so suddenly from my lurking-place. A calm shortly ensued; when I endeavoured to render myself useful by directing the vessel's course, while the boatmen were labouring at the oars. . . . Towards sunset I landed safely at Coppet, a small town in the canton of Lausanne, where in

company with my fellow-travellers I supped upon excellent trout, recently caught in the lake. It was at Coppet that I beheld a gratifying sight—a sight which reminded me of my native country: namely, a Swiss foot-soldier in his scarlet uniform, according to the canton to which he belonged. The reader will, I presume, give me credit, when I say that I felt myself unspeakably happy at my sudden deliverance from captivity—happiness which received a zest from my being in a friendly country, where restraint became unnecessary, and where the generous inhabitants were zealous in their acts of kindness towards me."

VI.

In one and the same day to regain a long-lost liberty and to see a scarlet coat—these are rare experiences in the life of a prisoner of war, and G. M. made the best of them, as he had made the best of whatever of good or ill fortune brought him. The rest was simple. He made his way to Frankfurt, thence to Hanover, and so at last to Bremen and Cuxhaven. Only one moment of fear he knew, and that was at Freiburg in Breisgau, then held as a hostage during peace negotiations with Austria, where he encountered a French sentinel. But his quickness of mind saved him once more, and finally, after four years of wandering, he landed at Yarmouth. His narrative has a value of its own. It is the

work of a pleasantly lettered boy, who has read Shakespeare and Don Quixote, and knows how to quote them. His French, which stood him in good stead, is never at fault, and his sketches of those whom he met upon the road are drawn with a light hand. But, as I have said, he deserves to be remembered, because he proves that English prisoners were treated with humanity and consideration, until Napoleon's sinister calculation discovered that even cruelty might be turned to his profit, and set an example of infamy, which has been vastly improved upon by the vulgar tyrant, who fondly believes to-day that the purple cloak of the French Emperor has fallen upon his uncemely shoulders.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

THE JOYS OF WAR.

Is war a brutalising experience? This is a question asked every day, and I daresay answered as unsatisfactorily as any such general question must be. It depends on the man, his particular environment, possibly his health, each of these factors being a changeable quantity. The answer is that war uplifts one man and degrades another. Both fear it (of that there can be no question); but one, despite his fear, feels morally and physically braced by it and enjoys it to the full, the other is nauseated by every side of war and feels lowered by every contact with it.

The joys of war are many, and can be experienced by no other means; thus to the individual who has tasted all things to satiety and longs for new and fresh experiences, I recommend war, and by war I mean life with the fighting arm of the Service.

I suppose, physically, one of the greatest joys is reaction after great exertion. How few civilised men know what it is in ordinary life to feel so tired that to lie down on straw-stuffed sandbags is literally to fall asleep immediately, and to sleep in an ecstasy of comfort and relaxation. Yet in war one gets this free gratis, and it never palls.

Anticipation is a delightful sensation: war is full of it, and very subtle are its pleasures. To-day it is raining; our feet are wet, nay soaking; we shiver

and cannot keep warm; but to-morrow we shall be relieved, to-morrow we shall plod out of this God-forsaken spot and taste the delights of possibly a fire, possibly a bed, and very probably a change of clothes. To-night there is a disgusting job to be done. The Brigadier considers the re-entrant on our lines at X 14 is dangerous, and we have to dig a trench across the open, to straighten the line. To-night in driving rain, with machine-guns sweeping for us every few minutes, this is a horrid business, or, as Jones says, very tiresome. But to-morrow we shall be relieved, to-morrow we shall have the unmixed joy of telling the Blankshires how much we did, how well our men worked, how much there is left for them to do, and that when we come in again we shall be interested to see how much they have done.

Sparke, the great Sparke, Fadgett's servant, who has been trained to cook like a chef under conditions that would make a plaster-saint weep, promised that to-night we should dine on quails, and has just broken the news to us that, owing to an unfortunate collision with Colins the runner, those quails are no more, and ration meat will be our lot. But what matter? How delicious will be the meal Sparke will prepare in billets, with all the advantages of a real fireplace and fresh butter! And so it goes on, the unpleasant fact obscured by the pleas-

ure to come always beckoning one forwards.

Fear of death or wounds, or fear of what not coming at you in the dark, is a pain which brings pleasure in its train. Without fear no man can know the full meaning of security—that feeling by which you escape from that something which makes your dog die in ten years, whereas, of course, he should live out his life with you. No dog—or other animal for that matter—knows the meaning of that blessed word Security; he sleeps with one eye open and one ear cocked, and thus burns out his life so soon. Here in billets, beyond the reach of shells, you can revel in security, contrasting your present state of mind with that moment when you sat crouched on the fire-step, nearly praying that the next might take you and relieve the strain. What bliss! You would not change places with Croesus, for he never can feel what you are feeling.

As you tramped in fours down that last hundred yards into the gates of Ypres, your ears cocked for the sound of coming shells, you were burning out your life at the rate of your beloved dog; but when you turned to the left and felt the solid rampart at your side, you began to feel the first effects of security; and when you swung down the streets of Poperinghe, nearing your cosy billet, you felt a tremendous fellow-feeling coming from the men behind you. Young Jones, whose presence in the trenches irritated you (this

very morning with the tail of his British warm he swept my tea to the floor, that tea I had been longing for; how clumsy he looked, and how I longed to cut short his stupid apologies!), now looked so tall and straight my heart went out to him, and I forgave him all—even that silly remark of his when a 6-inch shell missed my dug-out by a few feet: "Was that a Whizbang?"

A child comes into the world with one instinct strongly developed—that of acquisitiveness; it has no idea of the laws of *meum* and *tuum*. The mother has been taught, and tries to pass on to her child, the doctrine that it is better to give than to receive; and the little one rebels against a teaching which plainly is at variance with its instincts. It feels it to be against all reason that it can be better or happier for it to give its toys to another child, or that any other object-lessons in the beauty of unselfishness can be pleasant or produce happiness. One day, however, the child has an odd feeling. This scheme of doing what is unnatural, which is forced on it, has suddenly created a curious sense of happiness. Whether this sensation has in it the germ of the prig or not, it certainly leads, in some characters, to an intense desire to taste once more that feeling of pleasure produced by self-abnegation, and later in life the child observes and takes mental note that happiness is the only thing truly worth having, and that really happy people worship at this

odd shrine where, in return for pain, they secure pleasure; indeed, in some cases it may be said to be a vice, so anxious are those who know the secret to exchange the former for the latter. War is the place where this vice can be indulged, and is indulged. Stand on one side and watch the crowd go by. You will see countless men, from private to General, indulging in one way or another in this joy of war. Some know they are doing it, others unconsciously give themselves the pleasure. To them it has become a habit: most of them in peace never knew the sensation, but they will remain devotees to their death.

Smythe, who commanded No. 4 Platoon, was an unconscious worshipper of this strange god. We all noticed how happy Smythe was, how he revelled in the joys of war. When Smythe joined No. 4 Company it was an unhappy mess. When a dangerous or unpleasant duty had to be done, the question was always hotly debated whom did it take to do it. Cator said it didn't take him; he took the last working-party, and a dirty job it was. No, it certainly didn't take him. Each watched his neighbour, each saw to it that he was not imposed upon—all hated war, and could see no joy in it. Then Smythe came with a draft and joined them. They liked him and voted him a good fellow; he seemed to mellow everything, and yet he said little. When duties were discussed he said nothing, took what he was given,

and did it. When Cator felt seedy, he actually offered to do his work, but of course Cator wouldn't let him. All the time he radiated happiness.

That delicate subject of the leave roster came up again for discussion, and the good-natured Jones again lost his temper over it, the special question being whether Smythe was in this roster or the next. Smythe, curiously enough, thought he was in the next, and Jones left the billet at a loss to understand how any one could be fool enough to make remarks which might lead to the loss of one leave; but Smythe smiled on. He was enjoying himself. "These others had been out a long time; they were more tired than he was," he argued with himself, and a warm feeling crept over him, one of the joys of war.

Every schoolboy thinks his own school the finest, his own house the best, but he has the saving grace hardly ever to think himself the best; this process repeats itself in war and becomes one of the joys. Every soldier thinks his battalion the finest, his company the best, and probably his platoon the smartest. It is a form of healthy self-respect, of pride without offence.

The 4th Batt. of the Ironsides was a new battalion; it was something quite unheard of to have more than three battalions in the Ironsides, so the other three battalions sniffed and good-naturedly considered them raw, and their officers thanked God that fate had not cast their lot in the

4th Batt., which was new and had no traditions of its own. The 4th Batt. felt like a new boy at school. The tradition of the school belonged to them by birth, but not by right; their regiment was the finest, but their battalion had to prove itself the best. So inside the battalion in companies and platoons the spirit of emulation raged, but outside none dared yet to make the polite comparison by battalions which gives harmless joy, and they waited for the day when by acts, not words, they would be admitted within the magic circle, and all Ironsides would think in fours and not in threes. It came.

The Ironsides were hurried up to retrieve something rather like a rout. The youngest battalion was given the post of honour and behaved gloriously, upholding all the great traditions of the regiment, and showing themselves veterans like the rest. As they advanced in artillery formation as steadily as on a field-day, all, despite their fear, were feeling the joys of war, pride in tradition, the joy of sacrifice for an ideal.

Some people say that money talks—it does in peace with loud and vulgar accent. It creates artificial standards of living which in turn raise artificial barriers in society. We like to think that class distinction is one of intellect, environment, or taste; in fact, it is nearly always founded on the relative possession of money.

Jones and Smith were at a private school together, and were fast friends. They went

to the same public school and college, and their bond grew stronger; they had all the delights of the wonderful friendship between two men, probably the most beautiful and perfect form of love in the world. Then money began to talk. Jones's father had given him the same privileges as Smith, but with a struggle. He could do no more, and Jones had to get down to bedrock and make his way; he had to change his ideas and his standard of living. Smith was born with a golden spoon in his mouth, and had to take his place in the ranks of the super-wealthy. His standard of living went up; he was swept away on the tide of life, as we all are, but the two friends were in different currents. Smith and Jones still loved each other, but Jones felt he could not live up to Smith's rich friends. Their standard was beyond his reach; he did not envy them, they did not despise him. Simply money stood between and talked; so these two drifted apart. Then came war, when money talks in whispers because it is of no account. When a highwayman says, "Your money or your life," he knows the relative value of these things. Money does not count when men's lives are the counters in a great game. What use is money without life, and so men get to ignore it, laugh at its previous powers, and standards readjust themselves. Jones and Smith tasted one of the joys of war when Smith was posted to Jones's company, and the barrier of money was swept away.

IRONSIDE.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

CORRUPTION THE SIN OF DEMOCRACY—ITS MANY METHODS—
THE SALE OF HONOURS—VOTES BOUGHT WITH PUBLIC MONEY
—THE DECAY OF THE COMMONS—THE EMPIRE RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE—SHALL THE EMPIRE BE MISTRESS OF
HER OWN WEALTH?—GERMANY AND AMERICA.

SOME months since we discussed in these pages the means which may presently be taken to purify our politics, to check the growth of that corruption which has ever been the besetting sin of democracy. Politics, as a craft, is not governed by the laws which control other forms of human activity. Those who profess it are not in any way interested in the perfection of their work. They aim at the proximate result—their own office,—not at the ultimate result—the safety and prosperity of the Kingdom. Thus they differ from all other craftsmen. A pilot considers the safety of his ship. The pilot of a ship of state cares not on to what sandbank he runs, so long as his febrile hand still clutches the helm. In the golden age, when state came before party and profit, men were content to serve their country, for its good, in all humility of spirit. "Nowadays," as Aristotle says, "for the sake of the advantage which is to be gained from the public revenues and from office, one might imagine that the rulers, being sickly, were kept in health only while they continued in office." In truth, our rulers of late have been very sickly, and have followed

the one cure, which they know, with a disastrous pertinacity.

And by a strange irony we have been busy during the last ten years in toppling over all the ancient standards. Once upon a time a voter was asked to prove a property qualification. Thrift and industry were not of themselves deemed hindrances in the path of wisdom. We know better now, since our demagogues, with raucous voices, have denounced the "rich," and stirred up envy on a thousand platforms. At last we have reached the bottom of the pit. In Aristotle's phrase, "we are governed by the poor and not by the laws." Now poverty is an excellent thing to escape from. If it is a hard chastener of youth, it is a sad companion of middle life. So far from inspiring its victim with political sagacity, it warps his judgment and cripples his energies. Few men have ever been, ever will be, rich enough to sing hymns of praise to indigence, as does Mr Carnegie, that Pecksniff among money-bags, and pray that Poverty, honest Poverty, shall never perish from the earth. Whatever else poverty may be it is not synonymous with wisdom, and wherever it is made the essential of government, corruption inevitably

follows. For be it understood, poverty, a virtue in the elector, seems a vice in the elected, who takes the speediest means he may to get rid of it.

Now political corruption may take many forms. By far the simplest and least dangerous method is to rob the till. Where vast sums are spent upon public objects there is never any lack of pickings, and the greedy politician finds little difficulty in enriching himself at the expense of the State. We have called this the least dangerous form of corruption, because it destroys the moral sense only of the politician who practises it, and because its action may be accurately measured. The elected of the people who levies a commission on the money which passes through his hands, and spends it to gratify his own vice or ambition, is somewhat limited in his sphere of evil. He may destroy his own character, which is not of much importance; he does not necessarily debauch the ignorant dupes who have placed him in a position to betray their interests. In England of late this somewhat crude method of corruption has not been popular. Our politicians have preferred subtler practices, more ingenious devices. Those who are happy only if they are attached like limpets to the rock of office have discovered a useful adhesive of their own. During the last ten years we have witnessed a cunningly insidious method of bribery—the purchase of votes with public money. Pensions have

been granted with a lavish hand, or promised with a deceptive tongue. Small public offices have been invented by the thousand, which provided their holders with a modest competence, and would inspire them, it was hoped, with a lively sense of gratitude. The evil wrought by these forms of political dishonesty is far wider and deeper than the mere effect of personal embezzlement. For not only do they inculcate the pernicious doctrine that patriotism is synonymous with self-interest, but they abstract from honest employment many thousand of our citizens, and pack them into Government offices, where they waste their lives devoid of ambition, and content with the security of a pittance.

And no sooner was it discovered that there was money in the trade of politics than the Government of the country was firmly established upon a basis of cash. "Machines" were invented to ensure the victory of one set of men over another set of men, and the comfortable emolument of the victors. But machines cannot be oiled for nothing, and accordingly our political parties provided themselves with secret funds that they might the more easily compel their country to serve them. This inverted patriotism has been the cause of woes incalculable. The very secrecy of the funds makes corruption certain. We have no guarantee, for instance, that the declared enemies of England have not been permitted to support at an

English election those candidates whose return would be profitable for them. It is accepted, then, as an axiom that the "service" of the country—no longer "the constant service of the antique world"—is a purchasable commodity, and since the leaders who enjoy the profits of that "service" do not find the money themselves, they must offer an acceptable reward to the poor subscribers. This reward commonly takes the form of titles of honour. Our politicians traffic in knighthoods and put peerages up to auction. A fat cheque is sent to the central office, and Mr Jones of Sheffield rises Sir William. Radiant with his new dignity, he may exclaim with Sir John Brute in the play, "I am a gentleman born; the king has made me a knight." A still fatter cheque is sent, and Mr Smith of Manchester takes his place among our hereditary legislators and traces his pedigree as far back as William's Conquest.

This sale of honours is the worst form of political corruption ever contrived by the wit of man. In the first place, it is an insult to the King, who is himself, or should be, the fountain of honour. Alas! that fountain has of late been defiled by many turbid streams. There was a time when the King rewarded great public servants, wise statesmen, and gallant captains, for services rendered to their country. There was a time when knighthoods were a sure warrant of patriotism,

when a seat in the House of Peers and the opportunity it gives of founding a noble family were wholly separate from the intrigue of party politics. And until we revert to the wholesome practice of former times, there will be neither health nor hope in us. When titles were in reality titles of honour, it was possible to show an honest respect to those whom they dignified, because we knew that they were distinguished by their Sovereign's favour for wisdom or valour. There was no taint of snobbishness in the admiration which we felt for the ennobled. To-day, when honours are bought and sold, it is the title, not the act which earned it, that claims our respect, and thus we are persuaded "meanly to admire mean things." It is noteworthy that in France, where political corruption is not unknown, an attempt to traffic in orders and ribbons disgraced a president, and sent a well-known deputy to perpetual Coventry.

Now if democracy is to justify itself as a form of government, it must do its best to cleanse itself from the stain which now lies upon it. If we are to hold elections, there is no reason why the electors should not be free to vote as they please, why they should not shake off the tyranny of the political machine. There would then be no need for the party funds, which have helped to destroy the ancient rectitude of England. But if the habit of buying seats is so deeply

ingrained in us that it cannot be eradicated, we must take the common precaution of insisting that every penny of the party funds must be publicly accounted for, and the names of all the subscribers given to the world. In very shame a wealthy supporter of his party would hesitate to purchase a knighthood if the service which he did to his revered leaders was set forth in pounds, shillings, and pence. Nor is this publicity of itself enough. In the distribution of civil honours we must follow the admirable precedent of the Navy and Army. If a soldier be given the Victoria Cross, we are told the particular act of heroism for which he is thus rewarded. And we must ask no less when knighthoods and peerages are lavishly distributed among politicians and their wirepullers. A frank explanation of certain honours lately awarded would make even the cynics of the caucuses open their eyes in astonishment.

The suggestions for electoral reform which have recently been made are well enough so far as they go, but they follow only the well-worn lines. A measure of redistribution will doubtless correct anomalies, though at the same time it may abolish the few traces that are left us of local patriotism. It was once a seemly thing that a Dorset man should represent the free electors of Dorset. But the brisk young carpet-bagger, sent down by the central office, where he has purchased influence, has

changed all that. And not much violence will be done to our feelings if the old boundaries are effaced and the whole country is divided up into equal electoral districts. But these suggestions touch only the fringe of the subject. Purity of election is far more important than statistical accuracy. We care less, far less, for the principle of "one vote one value" than for the decencies of political life. If the extinction of party funds do not bring in its train the abolition of lying posters and oatch-penny pamphlets, the law of political libel must be vastly strengthened. A heavy penalty should await the rascal who invents, for his own and his party's profit, another glaring scandal such as the Chinese pigtail, upon which the Radicals climbed to power in 1906.

The necessity of reform is great, because not only is democracy on its trial; the English Constitution is being weighed in the balance. The Mother of Parliaments has fallen upon evil days. She trapeses the streets shabby and bedraggled. The House of Commons, once our pride, is to-day a disgrace of which we speak in hushed tones, as though we were ashamed of it. The title Member of Parliament, which used to confer honour upon its holder, is heard at best with a furtive tolerance. The fault is all the House of Commons' own. During the last ten years it has done everything it could to court disgrace. In the

days of peace, when its members might have guarded their independence without danger to the country, they delegated all their power to the Prime Minister, who made himself the president of a Committee of Public Safety. Whatever he told it the majority believed without a hint of criticism. Obedient to his lightest word, it walked into the lobby when he bade it, and asked no questions. And when the war came, and the safety of the realm depended upon the swift action of one or two, the members of the Commons still permitted the Prime Minister to carry on his debating society of twenty-three, though they should have known that it was a mere device to avoid decision, and that victory can be won only by a small autocratic council, sitting day by day.

Thus in war, as in peace, the House of Commons has failed to do its duty. And the responsibility lay more heavy upon it because, at the Prime Minister's bidding, it had done its best to destroy the power of the House of Lords. The destruction of the Lords' veto was a deliberate attempt to make Mr Asquith's cabinet tyrant for life of the British Isles. The attempt failed because the superiority of the Lords, as a deliberative assembly, was instantly acknowledged. Ever since the war began, the Peers have been conspicuous in counsel as in sacrifice. Lord Curzon's panegyric of his own House was not overcharged in a

single word. It was, he said, a house of mourning. And as the Peers and their sons have ever been ready to fall upon the battlefield, so, ever since the war began, they have been instant with wise counsel. Indeed, if we are to destroy the ancient balance of our Constitution, there can be no doubt that we shall best serve the public weal by putting the power and responsibility in the hands of those who know best how to use them—the members of the House of Lords. It was indeed in curtailing the power of the Upper House that the Radicals did their greatest mischief. An old country like England can be governed only in accord with an old tradition, and this truth the House of Peers has always understood. That House was always a salutary check upon those demagogues who thought that they could most easily ensure the triumph of their opinions by cutting the cords which bind us to the past. When the demagogues were fussy, and pretended that the passage of a single bill would create a new earth of voters and a new heaven of office, the House of Lords was a prudent obstacle in their path. For the Lords knew, what the Commons refused to understand, that the Chinese philosopher spoke truth who said, "you must govern a great state as you would cook a little fish, and not overdo it."

For this very reason, that the House of Lords is recovering its power and influence, it is important that it should

be guarded jealously against the encroachment of unworthy members. As its responsibility in the future will be great, so the tradition of its honorable past should be kept inviolate. And as for the House of Commons, if it do not reform its abuses and make itself once more worthy of some respect, then our situation is grave indeed. As the Houses of Parliament have decreased in public esteem, the burdens which they have assumed have increased marvellously. The War has imposed upon the Government new duties which cannot be shirked. In spite of ourselves, we have been compelled to admit as part of our life a kind of socialism. The Government has organised the workers, as it has organised the soldiers. We have become, whether we will it or not, a part of one vast machine. Those who cannot fight must work in munitions, or till the earth, or do whatever they are bid to do. The Government has become, at a step, an employer of labour on a vast scale. It controls the railroads, and it uses in accord with its needs the shipping of the country. It tells us how much we shall eat, when we shall drink, and what things we may purchase without detriment to the country. And it is natural that we should demand in exchange for our obedience an increased wisdom, a higher code of morals, from our tyrant statesmen.

The Ministry over which Mr Lloyd George presides is the practical confession of an

altered condition of things. The mere politicians find themselves superseded by men of commercial experience and expert knowledge, by men who do not owe their position to the polling-booth or to the popularity which is snatched upon the hustings. These men have been selected not by the gamble of a vote, but for the only reason which should sway the wise—by their fitness for the posts which they hold. Thus we have passed through a revolution almost unconsciously; there is a wholesome cleavage between the people and the executive; and this cleavage is made all the wider, because we have had no general election since the beginning of the war. For our part, we cannot deplore the cessation of democratic follies. We can only hope that the practice of choosing a man for a job, because he knows something about it rather than because he has made a speech, whose rhetoric caught the ear of the mob, will justify itself, and be continued long after the peace has been signed.

So every day wider horizons are opened up before the eyes of ambitious administrators. Already a committee has been formed to develop the resources of the Empire. After the war our national debt, we are told, will not be less than £4,000,000,000—a colossal figure, which means that, if we are to remain solvent, we shall need to raise an income of not less than £500,000,000. How is this vast sum to be obtained?

We cannot rely on taxation alone, unless we are content to check enterprise, to hamper trade, and to bring the whole community to the verge of poverty. But, says the Empire Resources Development Committee, the Empire itself owns an enormous property, of which hitherto it has not made the best. And it is the Committee's plan that the State should develop this property, and "secure both a large income with which to pay interest on the debt and also an immense unearned increment, out of which the whole National Debt will be ultimately paid." It is a dream, no doubt, but a dream, a part of which, at any rate, might come true.

Of the vast resources within the Empire, which covers more than a fifth of the habitable globe, there can be no doubt. The acres of virgin soil are there to be tilled. The fisheries of Canada and Newfoundland are ready to pour the vast wealth which may be obtained from them, into the imperial treasury. There are mines, and lands, and seas, which might produce more than enough to pay the National Debt, which has depressed us for a century, and which in the near future will be a far heavier burden than ever it was before. Shall we neglect the opportunity which is ours to-day, and revert to the ancient methods of hampering, unequal taxation? Or shall we regard the Empire as a great chartered company which shall trade with all the world, and

grow rich and solvent upon the money which it earns by well-conducted enterprise?

Now the Empire Committee's scheme is simple enough. It is that the Empire should take possession of its own resources before they have passed into private ownership, and to use them for the purposes and profit of the State. The scheme is possible to-day. It will not be possible always. "If these vast undeveloped fields be not secured by the State and for the State," we are told, "they will assuredly not be neglected. Already the eye of the private owner has alighted upon them." The answer would be easy, were it not for a distrust of Governments, which recent history has justified. In the past, State-ownership has sometimes been a triumphant success. "We, as a State," writes the secretary of the new Empire Committee, "put £4,000,000 into the Suez Canal. That £4,000,000 is now worth to us from £30,000,000 to £40,000,000. The Assouan Dam cost about £5,000,000. That has put about £100,000,000 into the increased wealth of Egypt. Of that £100,000,000 the State secures only a comparatively small share; the bulk, as Lord Milner has declared, goes into private pockets. Is this experience to be reproduced in Central, in East, in West Africa? 'If,' said Lord Milner on a famous occasion, 'you were to value West Africa to-day, and again twenty years hence, you would find the value gone up by a thousand per cent.'

Is this debt-laden Empire going by a policy of provident and righteous self-interest to divert this growth of wealth into its own coffers, or is it with dense and unnatural indifference going to insist that the unhappy State is to continue its intolerable burden of taxation without relief from any of these extraneous sources?"

These statements and these questions pose the problem with sufficient justice and clarity, and not all the objections which have been raised against the Committee's solution are of much importance. It is said, in the first place, that for the State to take charge of the enterprise, generally managed by private energy, is socialism pure and simple. We are not afraid of the word socialism. As Tories, we have been far more bitterly opposed always to the crude individualism of the Radical party and the *laissez-faire*, which is its corollary. If by organising our resources we can increase the wealth of the country, by all means let us organise them. Mr Bigland believes, for instance, that if the State took an active part in the distribution and marketing of fresh fish, it might add millions a year to its revenue. Should this be true, we see no reason why the State should not add this to its other duties. We would not rob ourselves and our Treasury merely to placate the ghost of Herbert Spencer, if that stolid spirit still walks abroad. It is not as doctrinaires that we should consider this question,

not as the champions of worn-out philosophies, not as mere gramophones, which repeat over and over again the catch-words of Cobden, but as patriots eager to see their country solvent once more, as practical men who would not see the sources of our Empire's wealth wantonly dissipated.

But if the Government of England is to add to the legislative and administrative duties which it has sorely neglected, the burden of the greatest commercial scheme known to the world, it must be a Government far better equipped morally and intellectually than those Governments which we have known of late. As we have said, corruption is the besetting sin of democracy; and is it likely that any Government which we shall see in the near future can be trusted with a business which is intended to pay off a debt of £4,000,000,000? That is the question upon the answer to which depends the success or failure of the Empire Committee's scheme.

It is obvious at the first glance that the scheme would open a way for corruption hitherto undreamt of. The thousands of men who would hope to find employment in developing the resources of the Empire might be, if the old habits were not discarded, the nominees of political caucuses. They might be chosen for no better reason than that they had fought a by-election or enriched the party funds with a generous contribution. We have seen many high

offices thus degraded, and we have no reason to believe that the politician will change his spots in the twinkling of an eye. In politics it may be all very well, or it might have been very well before the war, to choose a financier not for his knowledge of figures, but for a trick of eloquence. But if the State goes into business, it must choose its managers by a very different method; and before the scheme of the Empire Committee were accepted, it would have to be enacted that no politician shall ever be permitted to help in the development of our imperial resources. We do not want to see a briefless barrister set to take charge of the Empire's fisheries, or a solicitor, short of clients, put over the Empire's forests, or the cunning contriver of victory at the polls entrusted with the charge of the Empire's mines. More foolish things than these have been done in the past. We have all been witnesses of the small wisdom with which great countries have been governed in the past, and we would not advocate the adding of one burden to our Government's back, unless there is some reason to believe in a change of heart and a change of morals.

Our hope for the future, then, would lie in the employment by the Cabinet of men of business. The Empire would succeed in commerce only if it employed the best experts which it could find within its borders. It would be asked to pay them

generously, and to make them sharers in the profits which they amassed. As there could be no hint of political favouritism in their choice, so there should be no meanness in their rewards. If the possibility of these conditions be granted, we see no reason why the Empire should not be mistress of her wealth. But we remember the preparations for war which were made by Mr Asquith, Lord Haldane, and Sir Edward Grey, and we are forced to ask: Shall such men as these, who set the interests of a political party before the safety of the country, be trusted to send the Empire's fish to market, or to manage, even vicariously, the woods and forests, the corn-fields and the mines of our dependencies? Here is no doctrine, here is no theory of politics. We are confronted by what the Americans call "a business proposition," and we must first discover whether we can or cannot trust the managers.

The Germans during the last weeks have shown in excess their common tactlessness and ingratitude. Mr President Wilson was ready to meet them far more than half-way. He declared openly that he was the champion of a peace without victory—a peace, that is, which left Germany in full command of the situation. What this meant all students of history know perfectly well. It meant that the Germans would be permitted to re-organise their forces and to prepare for another war, when

they thought that they might make a more successful raid upon a peaceful Europe than they made in 1914. No indemnity would be demanded of them, no punishment exacted for the crimes which they have committed against innocent, defenceless people. They would have emerged from the war as honourable opponents who had done nothing to forfeit the good opinion of the world. Such was the opinion of Mr Wilson, who had already forgotten the assault upon Belgium and the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

And Mr Wilson was prepared to urge that the Germans should be granted greater privileges than these. He was prepared also to throw all the weight that he had into the scale against England. He professed himself the whole-hearted advocate of what is known as "the freedom of the sea." Now "the freedom of the sea" means briefly and plainly the extinction of England. England, alone of the Great Powers, depends for her security upon her fleet, and "the freedom of the sea" is cunningly designed to make England's fleet of no avail. If once it be acknowledged that a superior fleet shall not rule the waves, then there is a speedy end of our Empire. We can be invaded by the first comer; we cannot use the blockade, a just weapon of war, and we may just as well sink our ships and retire into the life of those who have lost hope and forgotten ambition. Mr Wilson was once a pro-

fessor. He has studied, we presume, the records of the Napoleonic wars, and he should have known that the one thing for which Napoleon fought is that thing which to-day is called "the freedom of the seas." On land Napoleon was the master of Europe. He could go whither he would, he could subdue whatever kingdoms excited his cupidity. On sea he was powerless. There the watchful eyes of England observed his slightest movement, and checked his meanest advances. So, said he, let us have the freedom of the seas, and Europe shall once more know the blessings of peace. It was a case of "tails you lose, heads I win." He wanted to crush the power of England without breaking it, and he did not understand the spirit of our islanders. He hoped, without striking a blow, to annul the victory of Trafalgar. It seemed a good plan to shear the locks of Samson and run no risks. Only he reckoned without Samson, who was unwilling that his locks and his strength should be taken from him without a struggle.

England crushed Napoleon, and continued to rule the waves. And now Mr Wilson comes along, and having seen in the sinking of the *Lusitania* and other ships in what terms Germany interprets the freedom of the seas, announces himself as a pupil and follower of Napoleon. If we took the speeches seriously which the academic President thinks well to address to his Senate, we should have looked upon his comments as

unfriendly. But we know well enough that what he says is not of the highest importance, and we passed his vague opinions by. One thing is certain in the minds of all of us. We shall not surrender the supremacy which we have gained and guarded upon the sea. If there be anybody strong enough to wrest the supremacy from us, let him come to take it. The fate of the ill-omened Declaration of London proves sufficiently that we shall not surrender our kingdom of the waves to all the professors who ever misunderstood the plain reading of history.

There is, in truth, no Englishman who can have greeted the pronouncement of the American President with satisfaction. It should have been received in Berlin with acclamation. Here was the head of a neutral State proclaiming at the top of his voice that he stood—we believe this is the correct American phrase—for all the policies of the German Emperor. And the German Emperor was unkind enough to laugh in the President's face. Perhaps he doubted the President's sincerity; perhaps he thought, as was true, that the President could not confer, if he would, the boon of a shackled England upon the world. But whatever was the motive, the Kaiser's action was clear enough. Instead of accepting the loud overtures of the President, he declared war by sea upon all neutral States. Here was the freedom of the sea with a vengeance. The free-

dom, which the Germans claimed, to sink at sight all the ships of all the countries of the world. No wonder President Wilson broke off relations with the Central Powers, who declared that they shared his desire to deprive England of her insularity!

What steps America chooses to take she must decide for herself. She is the best judge of her own honour. She ought to know how far Germany may impinge upon her rights and privileges without incurring her just wrath. For us it is irrelevant to express a judgment. Mr Wilson has been very active in the writing of notes. He is an adept in the sending of *ultimata*. For nearly two years his typewriter has lived laborious days and has suffered sleepless nights. And if we may accept the utterances of the President's typewriter as truth, we cannot avoid the obvious conclusion that Germany has committed many acts of war against the United States. It is not a pleasant situation, and it is none of our making. Nor should we be over-anxious about the result. Our course lies clear before us. We mean to beat Germany, and restore Europe to the possibility of an honest livelihood. If America comes in on our side, we shall welcome a new ally. If she finds it more convenient to remain neutral, in the sense which she interprets neutrality, we shall not complain. In either case, let us hope, we shall treat America

with the honesty and candour which we reserve for those whom we regard as our equals.

It is necessary to say so much by way of protest, because, if we may believe the newspapers, we are under a vast obligation to the United States. We approach these United States and their President always with cap in hand. For some reason, which is still obscure, we use a language in approaching America which we use in approaching no other country. This obsequiousness or condescension, call it what you will, is very bad for us and very bad for the Americans. We can never understand a nation which we persist in meeting at incompatible levels. Statecraft is not a game of poker that we should disguise our hand and our mind in the presence of a friendly colleague. If we may assume, as we may, that the Americans are men like ourselves, then the strange deference which we persist in showing them should be to them an affront. The injustice which it does to us ought to be obvious to us all. No real friendship is possible between two parties, when one persists in bending the knee.

And yet, if the journals speak truth, we must conclude that the Americans, in deciding to protect their own honour, are putting us under a heavy obligation. Of course they are doing nothing of the sort. The full weight of whatever obligation there may be lies upon the other side. Ever

since August 1914 we have been fighting the battle of America. We have supported, against the Central Powers, the twin causes of human freedom and human civilisation. Had we been beaten—which happily we shall never be—the hour of America would have struck. In the general cataclysm America's isolation from European affairs, America's sad, platonic faith in the Monroe Doctrine, would have disappeared for ever. She would have been the beaten foe of the Kaiser, unable to defend herself, to say nothing of those States of South America, which she has taken under her special protection. This is what we have accomplished, incidentally, for America, not because we wished to serve her, but because her hopes and desires happened to be the same as ours. We demand no gratitude, and we see no reason why we should give any gratitude. We cannot forget that a few weeks ago Mr Wilson's watchwords were "peace without victory," and "the freedom of the seas," watchwords which meant no less than the total extinction of the British Empire. And when he makes up his mind to avenge the affront which Germany has put upon him, let us not strew his path with the roses of undeserved compliment. Let us welcome him as a man who has seen at last what his duty is, and has resolved, somewhat tardily it may be, to do it.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

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A RETROSPECT.

"Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us."

—ECCLESIASTICUS.

It is given to few enterprises to look back with pride and complacency upon a history of a hundred years, to contemplate a long work well achieved, to one end, and with one unbroken policy. And that is the unique boast of 'Blackwood's Magazine.' Ever since 1817, when it came into being, it has held aloft the twin banners of sound

criticism and Tory politics. From hand to hand, in ceaseless succession, the lamp has been passed, alight and duly trimmed; and we who are the lantern-bearers of to-day run our course the more gladly, because a Blackwood still leads us, and because the rugged face of George Buchanan still frowns upon our standard.

I.

When the first William Blackwood established his Magazine in 1817 he was almost without a rival. 'The Quarterly' and 'The Edinburgh' carried heavier guns than those which he designed to carry, and fired their shots at greater intervals. 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' like the light cruiser that it was,

changed its course and its tactics as it would. 'The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine,' as it was called at first, to lose our metaphor, had a clear and separate purpose of its own. Though its policy in letters as in affairs was definite, it hoped to go farther afield, and to find a larger body of readers

than the others. The founder made but one mistake: he appointed as editors two men—Pringle and Cleghorn—who were manifestly unfitted for their position. They had neither the power to write themselves, nor the authority to induce others to write; and William Blackwood, as shrewd a judge as ever ruled the fortunes of a magazine, was not long in discovering their shortcomings. If he had made a mistake, he knew how to correct it. In three months he had cancelled the engagement of Pringle and Cleghorn, and was free by October 1817—the month in which the true ‘Maga,’ that we know, made her appearance—to mould her to his will. Nor was he, in this adventure, bereft of aid. There were at that moment two men, waiting for briefs in the Parliament House, who possessed in full measure all the gifts which he was seeking. John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart were already known to William Blackwood, whom they were destined to serve for many a year. The Saloon, behind the shop in Princes Street, had been a meeting-place for the wits of Edinburgh, an informal club, where men might see and discuss the newest books and exchange the gossip of the town. To Wilson and Lockhart, then, Blackwood turned with a happy confidence, and they responded to his call with all the gay energy of youth. For they were young in years as in spirit. If Wilson had passed

his sixth lustrum, he was still a boy; for truly he was of those whom time cannot touch; and a boy he remained unto the end. And Lockhart, though he was already mature in mind and brain, was no more than twenty-three years of age. Scholars both, who had learned all that Scotland and Oxford had to teach them, they were yet untried in the practice of literature. Their tales were all untold, their articles unwritten, since we cannot count as serious Wilson’s brief apprenticeship to the Lake School. Ardent and arrogant, as became their age and station, they held strong opinions, and they had the courage of them. So that, when William Blackwood enrolled them under his banner, they were ready to engage in the combat with all their forces, and without, for an instant, reeking of the consequences.

They approached the conduct of the Magazine in the spirit of frolic and jest. They threw into the enterprise all their wit and all their humour. They were no seasoned critics that they should care for justice, no morose pedants that they should face their enemies—those whose principles they condemned—with a frown. Thus for many a year they laughed at life, and seemed to those who encountered their scorn all the more formidable for that. The first number of the Magazine is still memorable for the Chaldee Manuscript, an elaborate jest, hit upon by a happy accident—a jest, more-

over, which set all Edinburgh by the ears, and ensured the success of the venture. It was, according to the accepted formula, the knife which cut the string, and sent the literary balloon coursing in triumph across the troubled sky. Like so many other daring experiments in satire, it has to-day lost its savour. We can admire the skill wherewith the Scriptures are parodied; we can wonder at the neatness of the phrase, of the sharp comment, which does not spare even the writers themselves. But the local allusions are lost in the mist of our ignorance. We care no longer for the strife which raged between Blackwood and the crafty Constable. Pringle and Cleghorn have vanished completely from human ken, and the aggrieved Dalrymple is no more than a name, even though he put upon his head the most battered of all the caps, and sought solace for his paltry headgear by threatening to advertise it in the law courts.

However, the fact that we miss the point of an ancient satire does not mean that the satire was pointless. Indeed, the point was so sharp that it pierced deep into the heart of Edinburgh society. One subject only was in all minds, upon all tongues—the Chaldee Manuscript. From a second edition the offending work was withdrawn, in deference to public opinion; but the withdrawal merely intensified the people's curiosity, and the original number was handed

about from friend to friend with a sort of furtive persistence. And even at this late hour it keeps this one interest for us: it sketches in terms that are not forgotten, the men who established the reputation of 'Blackwood's Magazine' firmly as upon a rock. "The first that came was a beautiful leopard from the valley of the palm-trees, whose going forth was comely as the greyhound, and his eyes like the lightning of fiery flame. And he called from a far country the scorpion, which delighteth to sting the faces of men, that he might sting sorely the countenance of the man that is crafty and of the two beasts. And he brought down the great wild boar from the forest of Lebanon, and he roused up his spirits, and I saw him whetting his dreadful tusks for the battle." The beautiful leopard, comely as a greyhound, is John Wilson, though some of his friends would hardly have recognised the highly-coloured image; and the great wild boar is James Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, who did not play so large a part in the drama of Blackwood as he pretended, and who is remembered to-day less as a wit than as a whetstone for the wit of others. But by far the closest to life and truth is the scorpion, which delighteth to sting the faces of men. There in a sentence we see Lockhart sketched as he wrote and thought, and if it be true that he found the likeness for himself, he had as fine a self-

knowledge as is given to few of the sons of men.

Thus there came to the aid of "the man clothed in plain apparel," whose "name was as it had been the colour of ebony," the leopard, the scorpion, and the wild boar. And the greatest of these in skill and temper was the leopard, beneath whose skin was concealed the gallant, the wayward, the ever to be forgiven John Wilson, or, as he chose to be known, Christopher North. It is not easy to unravel the tangle of opposites which met in this one man. He did nothing by rule, and his opinions, even of his friends, were always unexpected. He would work with ferocity, or he would do nothing at all. He would promise a sheet, and keep the Magazine open until the last minute, and then furnish not a single line. Or he would write thirty pages in a day and a half, and overwhelm the delighted Blackwood with an embarrassment of humour. He held fast to no settled principles of criticism; his judgment was as quickly changing as his habit of work and thought. He would overwhelm with abuse to-day the very man whom yesterday his praise had lifted to the skies. He was true always to the impulse of the moment, and followed wherever that will-o'-the-wisp, his inspiration, led him. Lockhart said of him that he was "one of the best-hearted men ever God put breath in," and that was no more than the truth. And certainly he served the Magazine with a constant,

unswerving loyalty. As we shall see presently, he was guilty of strange excesses and stranger aberrations. One of the first to acclaim the genius of Wordsworth, he presently held him and his poetry up to scorn. And that, too, after he had just renewed a long-broken friendship. What persuaded him thus to turn back upon himself it is not easy to guess. Perhaps the vision of Wordsworth, the very centre of a conspiracy of thoughtless adulation, set his nerves on edge. But assuredly, whatever the motive was, it was neither dark nor insincere. Wilson wrote always what he thought at the moment, and if on the morrow he changed his opinion, that was because he was never held in the bonds of a rigid formalism.

He was, indeed, a poet rather than a critic—a poet who lacked the power to express himself adequately in his proper medium. The best of his work is to be found in those curious medleys of prose and verse—the 'Nootes Ambrosianæ'—where the verse is often prosaic, and the prose at its best is touched with true poetry. It matters not who invented the form of the 'Nootes.' Hogg, of course, claimed them for his own, while Lockhart and Maginn tried their skilful hands in the making of them, but their true begetter was William Blackwood himself. And there is no doubt that their ultimate shape and form were due to Wilson, who made them a means of expression for his thoughts, and

who created within them that most highly diverting figure—the Ettrick Shepherd. That Hogg himself could ever have spoken the passages of eloquence ascribed to him by Wilson's generous hand, was impossible. The wit, the humour, the poetry, which Wilson put upon him, were always beyond his reach. And yet so great was the man's vanity that he was affronted by his colleague's light-hearted indulgence. He liked not the mystification, so dear to the heroes who met in the Old Saloon, and ate their oysters or emptied their jugs at Ambrose's, and the wound which he thought Wilson had inflicted upon his pride was never healed.

So for many a year Wilson poured forth prose and verse, criticism and politics, in the service of 'Maga.' His loyalty met with a warm response. William Blackwood regarded him always with an affectionate admiration, which was surely the best encouragement a contributor could receive. He took a constant delight, said he, in seeing Wilson do what nobody else could attempt except himself. To manage the Professor was not a simple matter. He was

lavish in promises, which he did not always keep, and he was quick to take offence. But the first of the Blackwoods had tact as well as courage; and after working together for many years, both men could look back upon the past with undimmed satisfaction. "All I shall say," wrote Mr Blackwood, "is that you have been the Genius and the Living Spirit which has animated the work, and whatever success it has had I owe unquestionably to you in the first and chief place. I can most conscientiously declare that, wholly independent of the success of the work (to which your articles are always sure to contribute), I have felt a happiness in receiving your communications which to me were far beyond any considerations of personal advantage. . . . All that I shall add is that there is nothing in this life I am so proud of as your friendship, and I hope and pray to God that it may continue while life lasts and with our children's children." Thus William Blackwood to John Wilson. And John Wilson repaid the generous sympathy of his friend by giving him of his best for many a long year.

II.

John Gibson Lockhart was as different from his colleagues as darkness is from light. The ardour of his mind was repressed and restrained. Yet the fire within him burned

the more fiercely, because he never permitted it to grow into a blaze. In all respects he seemed to hold himself in check. He was in very truth the scorpion, which delighteth to

sting the faces of men. But he put in the poison so quietly, that there might have been a hope against hope that it would escape notice. Wilson was ebullient; he attacked those whom he regarded as his enemies for the mere lust of battle. He liked to hear the cudgel resound and to listen to the cracking of broken heads. Lockhart, on the other hand, was cold, calm, and deadly. He did his work, as it were, in a half-silence. He preferred the fray to the noise of the fray. It was his aim to do execution upon the Cockney school, and the other objects of his detestation, with as smooth a despatch as possible. And for the office of executioner he possessed all the necessary gifts. He was incredibly wise and mature for his years. If you read of the encounters, with no knowledge of the combatants, you would think that Wilson was the untried boy, and that Lockhart was the self-possessed man, who had profited by a long experience. He was a true scholar, who had gone to Oxford with a Snell, and made himself master *utriusque lingue*. Some of his earliest essays, in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' dealt with the classics, in the only true spirit of criticism, as living poems. And then by an odd freak he regarded the classics of his own time with an eye of envenomed disdain. He was not a prophet of literature; he looked back more gladly than he looked forward; and we should not blame him therefor. He left posterity to discover the genius

that was contemporaneous with himself, and posterity has done the work most efficiently. Unfortunately, Lockhart has been blamed for expressing the prejudices of his own time, and not the settled opinions of a later age.

It has been suggested, moreover, that Lockhart suffered bitterly unto the end of his days for his connection with the Magazine. He has been represented as a sort of pack-saddle ass, upon whose back was laid the burden of all 'Maga's' sins. There seems to be no truth in this suggestion. Lockhart influenced Blackwood far more deeply than Blackwood influenced Lockhart. It is true, no doubt, that many articles were attributed to Lockhart which he did not write. That is an injustice inseparable from anonymous writing, as many others besides Lockhart have known to their cost. But for the rest Lockhart wrote as he would, without any prompting from outside. He contributed his articles to 'Blackwood's Magazine' because he there found a frank and open hospitality. He could not elsewhere have displayed his talent or fulfilled himself. When he attacked Hunt and Hazlitt, Lamb and Keats, he attacked them not because anybody urged him to the enterprise, but because he acted in accordance with his own judgment and disposition. Through all the vicissitudes of his life he remained faithful in his allegiance to the House of Ebony, as he called it. And

in 1853, when the end was not far off, he wrote to John Blackwood the letter which follows:—

"DEAR B,—If you think the enclosed worth a page at any time, they are at the service of 'Maga,' from her very old servant, now released from all service. J. G. L."

That letter does not breathe the spirit of one whose memory was haunted by old injuries, nor one in whose mind there rankled the mere suspicion of annoyance or regret.

The truth is, a vast deal of undeserved reproach has been cast upon Wilson and Lockhart by those who judge other times by their own. In 1817 criticism was an acknowledged instrument of political warfare. The Whigs and Tories assaulted each other with a violence which seems strange nowadays, but which was accepted then as a part of the literary canon. Whatever freedoms Lockhart took with the Cockney School were redoubled by the champions of Hunt and his friends. The Tories, indeed, were never a match in studied malevolence for the Whigs. Only as a rule the Whigs flew at higher game. Hazlitt surely had no right to complain of another's vituperation when he dared to put to Sir Walter Scott's account "the cold sweat of rankling malice, hypocrisy, and servility." And, accepting any standard we choose of yesterday or to-day, we can only condemn as the worst

known outrage upon truth and taste the attack to which 'Peveril of the Peak' inspired Hazlitt. In the 'London Magazine' this critic sketched the author of 'Peveril' in the following terms: "Intolerant, mercenary, mean; a professed toad-eater, a sturdy hack, a pitiful retailer or suborner of infamous slanders; a literary Jack Ketch, who would greedily sacrifice any one of another way of thinking as a victim to prejudice or power, and yet would do it by other hands rather than appear in it himself." Surely the Radical's sense of humour slumbered when he uttered these blasphemies, and then complained of Lockhart's treatment of himself. Moreover, the articles of condemnation were but a small part of the excellent stuff of which 'Blackwood's Magazine' was made, and the proprietor himself, though he was resolute not to give ground, soon lost his love of the fray. Nor did he ever trouble himself about the hostile criticism of the Whigs. "Indeed," said he, "the Magazine can be injured only by itself, not by its enemies, whose attacks seem merely to excite curiosity." And he went on his way with simple confidence in those who supported him and in the accuracy of his own judgment.

At the outset, then, the weight of conducting the Magazine fell upon Wilson and Lockhart. And then suddenly there burst upon Princes Street a new contributor who came nowhither, who gave no

address of his own, and who for a long while refused even to reveal his name. He wrote from *Minerva Rooms*, Cork, and signed his letters with the mystic initials R. T. S., which he pretended stood for Ralph Tuckett Scott. Presently he declared that he was called James Higginson, and only after a long interval wrote himself down as William Maginn, of Trinity College, Dublin. His name and address mattered not a jot. What was of importance is that he fell at once into the ways and thoughts of 'Maga.' He assumed to himself all the loves and hates of Wilson and Lockhart. He outdid them both in attacking the stronghold of Cockneydom, and those that took shelter therein. Thus a firm alliance was founded on sympathy, not on sycophancy, for Maginn was a born Tory, with a rollicking humour which none of his contemporaries surpassed. And he was to boot a finished scholar. A man whose versions of Homer were edited by John Conington and praised by Matthew Arnold need not fear to face the sternest criticism. And all that he knew, all his Irish wit, all his infinite skill in burlesque, were freely given to the cause of the Magazine. "Christopher says it is quite astonishing," wrote Blackwood to Maginn, "how you enter so completely into the very essence and spirit of 'Maga,' just as if you had all along been seated with us at Ambrose's, where the highest of our fun was

concocted." So he was admitted instantly into the inner circle. He is found capping verses with Wordsworth, receiving complacently the praises of Coleridge, daring to lay a hand on the 'Noctes' themselves, and doing and saying all that became a friend and ally of the Professor. For the Magazine he created the famous O'Doherty, sketched the famous duel of Ensign Brady, and (incidentally) wrote the article which Edgar Poe parodied from Blackwood's. His activity and adaptability were alike remarkable, but he was not born for the success which comes only from sustained effort. He beat the pavement of London for many a year, fell into debt and into the Fleet prison, lived to be befriended by Thackeray and to make a second reputation for himself in the pages of 'Fraser's Magazine.' If now and again, in the stress of life, he forgot that he was a gentleman, he never forgot that he was a scholar, and two admirable volumes of prose and verse remain to attest his skill and fancy.

Such were the three whose names are most closely knit with the early fortunes of 'Blackwood's Magazine.' And many were the distinguished men who came to their aid. Coleridge harboured so little rancour for the attack which was made by Wilson's cudgel upon his 'Literaria Biographia' that he was willing not only to write for the Magazine, but to sketch, after his wont, a plan by which its

usefulness might be vastly increased. The scheme, such as it was, was lightly discarded by William Blackwood, who had no intention of resigning his responsibility into another's hands. The articles which he wrote were gladly accepted, and despite their mystic philosophy, were welcomed and generously praised by Wilson and Lookhart. That Coleridge should promise more than he could perform was in the nature of things. It was equally certain that he should presently tire of his employment. But it is not a little to Blackwood's credit that he should count among his contributors the great man, whose feelings were said to have been wantonly outraged, and who bore so little malice that he proclaimed his opinion that Blackwood's was the best and wisest of all known magazines. And next after Coleridge came De Quincey, his friend, who long since passed into a legend. Everything about him was extraordinary: his elf-like shape, the rumours of his opium-eating, his coloured prose. He came to Blackwood through Wilson, who had known him among the Lake poets, and straightway began the sad drama of shifts and excuses, of money lacking and of articles promised. Now the printer's devil was stationed for hours at De Quincey's door, and was overlooked. Now between Lasswade and Edinburgh were continual comings and goings, which resulted either in a few pages of prose, or in a new and laboured

method of procrastination. Despite his ingrained habit of putting off, De Quincey was, like Coleridge, completely conscious of his powers; and while Coleridge thought it well to sketch for William Blackwood the proper method of conducting a magazine, De Quincey was sure that his back was destined to carry upon it the full burden of its conduct. "If Wilson and Lookhart," he wrote, "do not put themselves forward for the Magazine, I foresee that the entire weight of supporting it must rest upon my shoulders. I see clearly that I must be its Atlas." Blackwood's reply was as intimately characteristic as the letter which called it forth. "I can only excuse your letter," he wrote on January 8, 1821, "which I received to-day, by supposing that you were hardly awake when you wrote it. When I apply to you to be the Atlas of my Magazine, it will be time enough for you to undertake the burden." But to-day all the old disputes between proprietor and contributor, all the forgetfulnesses and irregularities of De Quincey, seem trivial enough. We remember only that it was the best of the great man's prose which appeared under the beard of Buchanan—the romantic fairy story of the Calmuck Tartars, the irony of Immanuel Kant's last days, the call to patriotism of "The Mail Coach," and the shadowy "Vision of Sudden Death." The Magazine which printed these little masterpieces, various as they are in

scope and form, need not brought against it by the consider gravely the charges malevolence of political foes.

III.

The first period, then, of 'Maga's' life may be called the period of those legendary heroes, Wilson and Lockhart, Coleridge and De Quincey. Others there were who worked with them. At the outset Scott lent a hand, like the loyal friend that he was, and once upon a time is said to have sent something to each of five consecutive numbers. All the "brethren," as Wilson called them, saw the vast importance of winning the Magician's support, for the Magician was the supreme arbiter of morals as of taste. Nor did the venerable Henry Mackenzie, the Man of Feeling, disdain to help the new enterprise, until he took offence at a harmless copy of verses, and pompously forbade the Magazine to enter his house. And then there was John Galt, who boasted, foolish man, that he could beat Scott upon his own ground, who proved in 'The Ayrshire Legatees,' printed in the Magazine, that there was still an unbroken field in Scottish fiction, and who became a bore, like many another, as one who had known Byron. But he was a faithful friend of the Magazine, published therein many of his entertaining works, and wrote besides many articles and reviews, perfectly suited to the pages in which they appeared, and to the company which they kept.

Thus the good fortune of 'Blackwood's Magazine' continued. It had set the pace—not an easy one—and found no difficulty in finding contributors to keep it up. Michael Scott flashed upon 'Maga' with 'Tom Cringle's Log' and 'The Cruise of the Midge,' two adventurous books which are still read with pleasure. He could neither make a fair copy of what he had written, nor correct his proofs. And he beseeches the kindly Blackwood "to select out of his pandemonium some Champollion of a devil, skilful and patient enough to decypher his hieroglyphics." But he could spin a yarn with anybody "by fits and starts, as he could steal time," and he found in 'Maga' a fitting patron. However, Michael Scott's was but a casual appearance. The era following the first success of Wilson and Lockhart belongs especially to Alison and Samuel Warren. A stranger couple it would seem impossible to bring together. Alison, an industrious writer, who could compose and deliver three articles in two days, who could build up histories in his leisure moments, and who worked so easily that he is not easy to read nowadays, was for many years a busy and efficient ally. He was prosperous, he was energetic, he was trust-

worthy. Nothing came amiss to him. The past and the present were equally clear to his hawk-like eye. He wrote of politics, of economics—of anything which the conductor of the Magazine chose to put into his hands. He was as keen an opponent of Reform as he was a vigorous supporter of the Corn Laws. He fought Cobden, whom he regarded as a monomaniac, and Cobden's heresies with conspicuous ability; and he did a vast deal to strengthen the tradition of Toryism, which was cherished then, and is still cherished, by the house of Blackwood. No better foil could be found for Alison than Samuel Warren, whom Mrs Oliphant, in her admirable history, describes as a spoilt child of the Magazine. He was of those born for an instant popularity, and he won his birthright without trouble. An Englishman, who had been educated in Edinburgh, he attached himself early to Blackwood, as in duty bound. From the very first he was humoured and petted as he wished. A swift success seemed natural to him, and he indulged his vanity without stint or restraint. When there was none by to applaud him, he was frank and generous in applauding himself. His 'Diary of a Late Physician' appeared

at intervals during the thirties in the Magazine, and brought to the author all the fame which even he could have desired. "Would you believe it," he writes to Blackwood in a happy moment, "I have by me one of my papers translated into the native Cherokee language." Quickly elated, he was as quickly cast down into the depths of despair. A hostile criticism was to him like a gust of east wind to a southerner. "I am dreadfully depressed," he writes when the *Late Physician* was at the top of his vogue, "and if this paper is rejected I shall be too disheartened to send any more. So pray put one line in the post saying 'IT WILL DO,' and I am willing to pay three times the postage-money. Do! Consider I am ill, and in a low state." Fortunately for himself, Warren received more flattery than reproach, and he took it all without a hint of suspicion. When Sir F. Pollock told him that "a single page of 'Ten Thousand a Year' was worth all that Dickens ever wrote," he gravely thought that the pronouncement was a proper tribute to his power. But he was a loyal friend and contributor, and many were the Blackwoods who delighted in his company, or listened with a genuine sympathy to the stories of his own prowess.

IV.

As we look back into the past, two things are clear to us—that those who had once sent

an article to the Magazine were constant in their allegiance ever after, and that the

Magazine had the rare faculty of attracting to its pages the best work of its contributors. It was to 'Maga' that Bulwer sent 'The Caxtons' and 'My Novel'; it was to 'Maga' that were submitted, almost furtively, the earlier stories of George Eliot, another "great unknown," whose books are familiar wherever the English tongue is read and spoken. Truly, the list of contributors is a long one. Dr Moir, the amiable Delta and author of 'Mansie Wauch,' early took his place, and kept it to the end. And Professor Aytoun was for many years ready to turn his hand to prose or verse, to politics or fiction, as the reigning Blackwood wished. What other Magazine, indeed, could ever justify the boast made by John Blackwood in April 1842: "What a number we shall have! Wilson, Bulwer, Warren, Lander, and De Quincey"?

Moreover, not only did the contributors send their best to the Magazine. If once they had taken service, as I have said, their loyalty never faltered. Wilson and Lockhart, for instance, were ready, even eager, to write unto the end of their lives, though the longest recorded period of service may be claimed by Gleig, the author of 'The Subaltern,' whose first and last article were separated by no less than sixty years. And when we descend nearer to our own time, to the era which may be said to be dominated by Mrs Oliphant and her kinsman Laurence, we may mark the

same constancy. Mrs Oliphant wrote for the Magazine for the first time in 1853, and died in 1897 with her pen still bravely held in her fingers. There was no kind of literature which she did not touch and adorn. Novels, history, criticism, comments upon life and current events—all these came from her tireless hand. Assuredly she was one among the greatest men of letters of her time, and the courage wherewith she bore the hardships of life, for her by no means slight, equalled the energy with which she wrote and worked.

To Laurence Oliphant was given the happier chance of turning adventure into literature. Cities he knew and men, and from Palestine or Turkey, from Poland or America, he sent to the Magazine his vivid sketches of manners and policies. He was equally familiar with shady finance and shady revolutions, and not even the ministrations of the prophet Harris impaired his vigour or softened his cynicism. Nor is the story of the Magazine half told. We must in passing inscribe upon our banners the names of Charles Reade and Anthony Trollope, of Chesney and Hamley, of Laurence Lockhart, "the nephew of his uncle," of Lever and Marion Crawford, of Blackmore and of Frederick Greenwood and Lord John Manners. Of two of these something more must be said. Sir George Chesney and Sir Edward Hamley were the first two in a long line of soldiers who have helped to shape

the character of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' and whose work has borne good fruit during these years of war. Chesney's 'Battle of Dorking' attained a celebrity which is given to few magazine articles. Its praises were sung wherever soldiers or statesmen were met together, and if only we had listened with a better attention to the prophetic lessons which it taught, 1914 would not have found us disastrously unprepared. Sir Edward Hamley, variously gifted, was a man of letters as well as a soldier. From 1851, when he sent his first article to the Magazine, unto the end of his life, he was an assiduous contributor. He wrote stories and military history with an equal ease. He showed in 'Shakespeare's Funeral' how deftly his fancy could play upon the past, and in 'Our Poor Relations' expressed that love of animals which, fifty years ago, was much rarer than to-day. In brief, few magazines may boast a finer array of names, and let it be remembered to 'Blackwood's' credit that the habit of signing names was not encouraged, and that it depended less upon the fame of its contributors than upon the excellence of their work.

Since the very foundation of the Magazine the world has always been perplexed about its Editor. And the perplexity is intelligible, because in the ordinary sense the Magazine has never had an editor at all. With a wise persistence the proprietor has kept the reins

firmly in his own hands. He has dominated it with the wisdom not merely of one man but of a house. As there has been a succession of writers, as we may mark the periods of Wilson and Lookhart, of Warren and Alison, of the Oliphants, so there has been a succession of Blackwoods, all faithful to the same tradition. This system has given the Magazine a unity of character and purpose which it would be difficult to match elsewhere. If you read the letters printed in Mrs Oliphant's history of William Blackwood and his Sons, you might almost believe that they came all from the same hand. Whether it be William Blackwood the First or Alexander, whether it be the Major or John, or William the Second who holds the pen, it matters not. They are inspired by the same hope; they are aiming to reach the same goal. To two principles they have been ever true: they have refused always to publish anything which they did not deem suitable to the Magazine, however lustrous was the name of the author, and they were determined when they had found a contributor to make a friend. The result is that Blackwood's Magazine has ever had a corporate life of its own. It is not a mere medley of heterogeneous articles. It is a single work, conducted by a single mind, for a single purpose.

No better example, then, of the force of tradition could be found in the annals of letters than the House of Blackwood. Its continuity is still unbroken.

It has not sacrificed the force and influence of the past to the superstition of change and progress. It has recognised "the march of mind" for the folly that it is. It prefers to keep to the older ways of its founders. In politics it has been faithful always to the principles of a sound Toryism. It boasted in 1827, with perfect justice, that it was "the only journal which has espoused the cause of the High Tories, and for years attacked the Liberals and the Free Trade Political Economists"; and it might echo the boast to-day. Four years later it looked upon the situation with a tranquil eye. "'Maga' has kept on her own course," wrote William Blackwood, "cutting up both sides when they deserved it, and consequently her independence has preserved her character and influence. The change of Ministry has been no loss to us." Thus the Magazine went on its way unperturbed.

It would yield neither to Reform nor Repeal. It fought Cobden and his friends with the same spirit with which it had resisted the surrender in 1831. It has never supported quiet compromises nor uncertain counsels. It has spoken out with all the force of its past, to which it is determined, as ever, not to be disloyal. And the past, remote as it seems, is still visibly linked to the present. Those of us who were happy in the friendship of Mr William Blackwood, who died but a brief four years before the Magazine, which was his pride, attained its centenary, have learned from him the ancient manners, the honoured ambitions of the house. And so we look confidently to the future, conscious that, if only we revere the wise traditions of a hundred years, we shall prove ourselves not unworthy followers of the great men who went before us.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

BESIEGED IN KUT—AND AFTER.

BY C. B.

I.

TEN months of monotonous overwork at the Base, finishing up with an appalling hot weather amongst the floods, had made us all soul-weary and "fed up" with life in general, so that the prospect of moving nearer to the Front and the glorious uncertainty of the future higher up the old, old river were doubly welcome.

Mobilising our men and material, packing up all the extras we could get hold of, and handing over our responsibilities to others, were a wonderful tonic to our stale and tired brains; whilst over all lay the sense of coming events, of the imminence of another battle,—the anticipation of which sent the blood coursing more swiftly and sentiently through our veins, bringing with it a feeling of elation and of the joy of life. Guns and horses, mules and men, carts and stores, were being pushed up in boat after boat, barge upon barge; whilst we at the hospital, watching them go by, went with them in our hearts, and with our lips grumbled at our own inactivity and chafed at our delay. But at least some of us were soon to press hard on their heels, with the chance of sharing in whatever was going forward.

A game or two of strenuous football on the dusty parade-ground of the old Turkish barracks was a welcome relaxation in those last days of waiting. Little did we guess that in a few short weeks half that gallant regiment would be lying with loosened knees on the field of Ctesiphon. . . .

When all our stuff was packed and piled ready for loading, we waited with such patience as we could muster for the word to move and the transport to take us. Soon the former came, but the latter hung fire. All available transport was being used for troops and guns. The turn of the medicals would come when a few odd square yards of deck-space fell vacant. But at last a "whole steamer" of microscopic size, big enough for about one-third of our requirements, was provided. This we boarded with some of our personnel and less of our equipment, and started away merrily on the new jaunt. Could we have foreseen what was to come, and all the horrors of Kut that lay before us, we should have commenced our journey with very different feelings. How different was to be the return of a small fraction of our party nearly a year later, and with what an experience behind us!

As it was, our departure was invested with all the glamour of a launch into the unknown; a fresh chapter of our part in the great adventure was opening.

At ten o'clock on a bright morning we cast off from the little wooden jetty with a nod and a hand-shake with old associates, and started away up the splendid reach of the river which stretches between Busra and Kurna.

Lined on both sides by deep groves of graceful palms down to the water's edge, the broad majestic river presented a fine sight. The palms formed a beautiful monochrome study, from the light bright green of the upper fronds, reflecting the brilliant sunlight, to the dark and sombre hues of the shaded aisles beneath. This under-world of the palm-groves, especially when the floods are high enough to cover entirely the ground beneath, forms a beautiful picture. It is a vast and beautiful cathedral, with its thousands of columns of sepia brown boles supporting a gothic roof of luscious green. The trunks are arranged in parallel rows, which thus form innumerable cloisters and aisles stretching away in all directions until they are lost in the distant background of velvety green. Here and there rays of sunlight pierce the rich canopy, and show up in a thousand reflections the warm brown smoothness of the liquid floor that is spread like polished marble beneath. A cathedral! Nay, rather a gorgeous hall of audience beloved of the Eastern

monarch. 'Twere easy to people it with its natural complement of courtiers and slaves, its ambassadors and merchants, its beggars and its suppliants, at the throne of a mighty despot.

Passing from dreams to realities, we wonder at and try to calculate the wealth represented by these millions of generous date-bearing trees, which for over a hundred miles line both sides of the Shatt-el-Arab to a depth of a thousand yards. If each tree produce ten shillings' worth of dates per annum for seventy years, and there are so many millions of trees, what revenue will be derived from the Busra Vilayet?

We have become fond of the palm. She is Mesopotamia, so far as we have seen it,—we have watched her and her mate quiescent during the winter, blossoming forth with flowers and new foliage in the spring, have noted the process of fertilisation guided and controlled by her human owners; watched the formation of the fruit whilst her huge and graceful leaves spread themselves in their richness and pride; and finally, have awaited with ever-increasing curiosity the ripening of the generous fruit hanging in great golden bunches from her neck. Borne down with the weight and wealth of the fruit, exhausted by their wonderful effort, these god-sent trees lose their gloss and colour; their lower leaves wither and brown; they look worn and bedraggled, they retire to rest for another winter, and care

not how their human task-masters dispose of their progeny. They have done their work; they have earned their rest. Their fruit does not, however, represent their only usefulness. The lighter parts of the old frond are used for making matting, which forms the floors and the walls of many a poor dwelling, whilst the stem of the leaf, tough and strong, serves the hundred purposes to which stout sticks are put—the base of the old leaf is the staple firewood, and the trunks of the old trees are seen in many a rustic bridge over irrigation channels, and form the props or beams of many a house. No part of the palm is lost, nothing is wasted.

We reached Kurna after dark. Passing by the mouth of the mighty Euphrates, we anchored off the middle of the little town. We could see nothing but a subdued light here and there below the dim outline of the house roofs. A hail and an answer, a few short orders, and we take up our final position for the night. Are we near the Garden of Eden? What will it look like by the light of day? We passed a miserable night, for the sand-fly is in his myriads and neglecteth not his opportunity of taking his fill of the blood of the soldier-men who sprawl on the upper deck. I can quite imagine that the sand-fly was one of the first of the exterior pests to attack our first parents when they were driven forth, and that Adam at least made a remark that can easily be understood by

those who have made the acquaintance of the little beast.

But joy cometh in the morning, and soon after the sun was up we were ashore with the object of climbing the look-out tower and so getting a bird's-eye view of the country round and of the confluence of the two ancient rivers. The tower, built by the R.E., was 180 feet high, and the climbing of it by ladders served as a good appetite-raiser for breakfast.

From its top, which was once hit by a shell, a splendid panorama of the surrounding country is spread before one. To the south-east the stately Shatt-el-Arab, with its palm-covered banks, stretches away into the haze to Busra; to the west the Euphrates, the very name of which makes one pause and dream for a moment amongst the fascinations of Biblical history, winds away towards Nasiryeh and the shallow lake. At one's feet lies the mud village of Kurna, and the Tigris with its boat bridge and the site of the Turkish boom, which we broke with our ships a few short months ago; across the river another clump of palms; all else, desert, which begins abruptly at the fringe of the palm groves. To the north the Tigris wanders along like a silver streak, through ilimitable barrenness of sand and marsh, to the distant horizon, or is lost in a flickering mirage. Take away these little ribbons of life-giving water, and nothing is left—nothing, nothing. Easily can one understand the Oriental's

love of a garden, a retreat, green and well watered, filled with delicious fruit, perfumed with the sweet odours of a thousand flowers, where trickling water, clear as crystal, lulls one's senses to languorous repose; a shady refuge walled around, and protected both from the cruelty of the blistering sun and from the irritation of the blinding dust. Small wonder that his ideal of a happy dwelling should be the very antithesis of his sun-baked desert country.

Descending to earth, I went in search of Lancelot, and then for breakfast to the sylvan quarters of some friends who were stationed here. Eaten up by sand-flies and plagued by mosquitoes in their reed huts amongst the palms and village houses, they had dragged on a weary existence through the long months of a wicked hot weather, and were heartily sick of it. Busra is bad in the hot weather, but Kurna is probably the worst spot on the river—always moist, save when the "Shamāl" blows well, the heat may be anything up to 123° for weeks. Combine this with insect pests and a monotonous existence, and you have a terrestrial hell wherein life has no charms.

The huts and hospital wards and barracks were constructed of walls of dried reeds from the marshes, in crossed layers or in bundles, roofed over with the same material, which afforded good protection from the sun. A large number of sick had been accommodated in these at one time,

but they were now nearly empty.

Breakfast over, we boarded our little stern-wheeler, and watched another "mahela" being made fast to our remaining free side. This carried a surveying party under Major L—— of the R.E., who had put a roof on it and turned the waist of it into a tolerably comfortable residence, and we were glad to get on board now and again to talk and smoke. Thus squeezed between two heavy mahelas, our gallant little craft struggled gamely on, and made about three knots against the stream. The time passed pleasantly enough. It was good to sit well forward on the little bridge and enjoy our idleness and the desert air.

Palm-trees were soon left behind, and the landscape for miles offered nothing better than a few scraggy crops on the river banks. Away from the banks the ground sloped gently downwards, and fell into widespread areas of reeds and marsh. An occasional flight of duck was met with, and sometimes a few teal would settle on the water ahead of us, only to get up again on our approach and carefully keep out of range. Humans were scarce, but from time to time we came upon a watch-tower built four-square of mud-dried bricks, whilst beside it nestled a few reed huts or rude cloth tents of a family or two of miserable nomads, or of the watchman's people, with their brats and their ponies, their dogs and chickens. Here and there,

as you go up the river, you see the tomb of some holy man whose monument it is—some village Jacob or local prophet. Their invariable and only form is that of a dome surmounting a square platform or plinth, the whole built upon a low mound, and made of the same material and of the same tint as the surrounding dust-coloured silt. By its side is sometimes a lean-to or mud hut, with its tiny doorway, wherein may live the caretaker of the shrine.

Though a little hot at mid-day, the weather in this mid-October was delightfully clear and bright, and the breeze we made was enough to keep away the fly and other biting beasts.

Sketching and dozing were the order of the day, and we felt we could do with a large dose of such an existence. The course of the river is extraordinarily tortuous, winding to right and to left—now going northward, and now bending back in an almost complete loop to the south, mile after mile, and the scene does not change. Dotted about on the plain—some going in one direction, some in another—the graceful sails of large native cargo-boats are noiselessly moving hither and thither in all directions, like wherries on the Norfolk Broads; but for all one can see of the river beyond the nearest bend, or of the boats themselves, they might very well be a squadron of land yachts engaged in a peaceful regatta race. Far away on the horizon can just be made

out the smoke of a distant steamer curling up into the misty blue. Soon we shall meet it, and perhaps get news of the recent battle. Just at sunset we approached Ezra's famous tomb. Standing on the right bank, amidst a clump of palms, its turquoise dome reflecting the glory of the setting sun, it formed as charming a picture as one could wish to see. Coming down the river a year later, I observed a huge rough notice-board that had been put up quite near the base of the venerable pile, bearing some necessary directions relating to navigation. It seemed to desecrate the ancient sanctity of the place.

An hour above the prophet's tomb, we anchored for the night close to the steamer whose smoke we had espied earlier in the day. She had on board a couple of hundred or so wounded from the battle of Kut a week ago, and was towing a couple of barges containing 400 Turkish prisoners. From her officers on board we got tales of the fight, and, alas! the names of fallen comrades. With the medico in charge, an old friend, we strolled round his Hospital Ship and consulted over one or two bad cases that he was anxious about. His patients were tucked in for the night, and seemed cheery and comfortable; but the lights were shaded, and many were already asleep.

The padre gave me sad news of a special chum who had been dangerously wounded,

and had been asking for me; but he had been put on the preceding ship, and so we had missed each other.

We were well off the mark at dawn next day, and all went well and as monotonously as usual until midday, when we met a large paddle-boat well grounded on the mud. We had been in sight of her for hours, and guessed her trouble, and could see her making desperate efforts to get off the offending sandbank. As ill luck would have it, she wrenched herself free just as we were about to pass her, with the result that we collided and got badly mixed up. The free language and forcible remonstrance of the P. boat's skipper were quite lost upon our own captain, who was an Arab of no linguistic attainments. We had to slip our two mahelas and impotently watch them float away down-stream on the wrong side of our unwieldy antagonist. We just got by ourselves, and forthwith tied up at the bank for the next four hours until we could rescue our helpless boats. The river here is narrow and its submerged sandbanks many. With no way on it, the P. boat and its heavy barges became an unmanageable mass of wood and iron, and it was not long before it swung round so much that the bows of the starboard barge stuck on one bank and the stern of the port one on the other bank, thus blocking the fairway completely. For a time we watched the unfortunate skipper resume his efforts to get clear, ringing the

changes on paddles and kedge, donkey-engine and cable, or man-haulage from the banks—a tiring business, and one calculated to try the temper of the calmest sailor. Lancelot and I strolled off in different directions, I to inspect a tomb in the vicinity. In doing so, my wanderings took me beyond a slight rise in the ground, which hid me from my faithful staff, whom I met an hour later come out to look for me, armed *cap-à-pie* and anxious as to my whereabouts.

That night we reached the village of Q——S——, where was a telegraph station and a detachment of Indian infantry as guard. The Arabs here were none too peaceably disposed, and marauders were like to be met with, so we turned in feeling quite prepared to be unpleasantly awakened. Sure enough, in the middle of the night a shot rang out, then another, and another—a dozen in all. They appeared to come from the bank close by, but nothing more happened, and we were just settling down again when the splash of oars was heard, and a boat came alongside. Out of the darkness a Tommy's clear voice hailed—"Is there an officer on board?" We assured him that there was, and he then proceeded to inform us that one of their number had run amok and chased them all out of their quarters.

"'E went mad, sir, all of a sudden, collared all our rifles, and came for us with the butt—swore 'e'd do for us, and would shoot anybody who came

near the place—'e's firin' away now at everything 'e sees,—what are we to do, sir?" "What upset him?" we ask. "Well, sir, 'e got 'old o' two bottles o' whisky, and because we wouldn't drink with 'im, bein' teetotalers, 'e drank the lot himself and went ravin' mad." This solved the problem, and when the three homeless ones averred that they could double up with the Indian guard for the night, Major L—— advised them to leave the maniac alone and let the spirit do its work. This it

did, for quiet soon reigned, and at six o'clock the next morning the culprit was sober, and denied all knowledge of his night's frolic.

Resuming our journey, we soon landed to stretch our legs, and keeping pace with our boat we walked up such birds as there were, and bagged a couple of brace of black partridge, which made a welcome addition to the pot.

Reaching Amarah just before sunset, we heard to our joy that we were to proceed at once to Kut.

II.

Amarah, with its ten or twelve thousand inhabitants, is a well-built town, situated for the most part on the left bank. With its forests of mahela masts on both sides of the broad river, its palms and gardens, and its long, straight row of handsome houses on the river front, the view of the place as you approach it from the S.E. is a pleasing one.

The houses are two-storied, surmounted by a flat roof, with its usual flimsy-looking encircling wall. Most of them have large and handsome bay-windows, projecting from the first floor, and made of carved or latticed wood, with generously designed cornices. These first-floor rooms are large and airy, and form ideal quarters, except in the hottest weather.

The Bazar is large and roomy, with a lofty, gabled roof. Save for the absence of

glass, it reminded one of our own arcades, though it comprises a whole street. At the river end are a couple of good shops, where European stores are to be had. The late Sultan, it is said, took a special interest in the designing and erection of this town, in which he was personally interested. It is but fifty years old; its population is a mixture of Moslems, Sabæans, Jews, and R.C.'s; it exports grain, and lies at one end of a trade route to Persia.

At Amarah we remained that night and all the next morning. Dropping Major L—— and his survey party, we took on another mahela with two more medics and their kit, and a few tents for ourselves on loan from another section of our own hospital already established here. Also, we bought stores and food, and had a look round gener-

ally. The Arab inhabitants were respectful and seemed anxious to placate our people; the R.E. were very busy with barracks and hospitals.

Off again at midday, we reached Kamait an hour after sunset and anchored. Here our friend the sand-fly was in force and defeated our sleep badly, so we landed early, and keeping pace with our boat, we bagged a brace of partridges and a hare and forgot the miseries of the night. We saw many huge flights of duck and some sand-grouse, but none came within range. The country remained most uninteresting, and a few groups of nomads, with their flocks of sheep or a herd of camels, were the only relief in a scene of barren desolation.

That night we anchored, most unwisely, within a mile or so of a large herd of these prehistoric beasts. Amongst them were many white camels, which look uglier even than the ordinary sand-coloured ones, if that were possible. Unwise were we, for the smell of the animals, perhaps aided and abetted by that of their equally dirty human attendants, permeates and poisons the sweet desert air for a distance of a couple of miles at least—and there is nothing else like the stink of an "oont."

Next morning we reached Ali el-Gharbi, where we found established a strong perimeter camp held by a few companies of the Blankabad Infantry. The "intelligence" officer here cheered us by the information

that persistent Bazar rumours had it that a goodly force of Arabs, with a couple of guns, was manœuvring in the neighbourhood. As these gentlemen had cut up and burnt a large convoy a few days before, it was suggested that we might have trouble. We were therefore advised to fortify our craft as best we could and "clear for action." As our guard consisted of a lance-corporal and six men, all jungly recruits, this was indeed merry news! but, in the absence of more precise details, there was nothing for it but to get on. We spent the next few hours in putting up breastworks of bundles of tents and hospital boxes and bales, the while we stationed a look-out on the awning above the bridge, which just enabled him to see over the high banks in this portion of the river and get a good view of the surrounding country. Hereabouts the river approaches its nearest to the Pusht-i-Kuh, the western bulwarks of Persia. Bare and brown and barren, and thirty miles away, these rugged hills are often ravishingly beautiful in their delicate pink at sunrise, or in their hazy mauve and purple gloom at even, when their charms appear as though partly hidden by a diaphanous garment of milky white.

We were not molested, and at nightfall we fell in with a P. boat stuck on the mud, and so anchored close by her for company. At dawn we spent a couple of hours helping to get her off, and then proceeded

on our way. Soon we passed Sheikh Sa'ad, a place destined often to be in our thoughts in the near future, and also many a burnt and sunken mahela, half submerged near the banks, eloquent tributes to the work of the marauding Arab force. These wrecks stretched at intervals for miles up the river, and it required no very strong imagination to picture the gallant little running fight of the escort against a cruel and ruthless enemy in overwhelming odds.

But we are nearly at the end of our long, lonely voyage, for next day, soon after sunrise, we make out the solitary minaret and the patch of palms that mean Kut. An-

other hour, and our syren is uttering its thick and discordant request for the boat bridge to be opened for us to pass through. Just above it we tie up to the bank and await the pilot who shall guide us along the tortuous channels that lie between us and the town. The place seems quite near, so that two of us make a bee-line for the camp, which we can see pitched a little away from it, to find out where we are to dump ourselves down when we do get in. The pilot soon arrives, but it takes us many hours to round the great bend of the river and get to our moorings, and we have but time to land a few stores before darkness sets in.

III.

Our first impression of Kut was not a pleasing one. Approaching it from the east, almost the first thing that caught the eye was a gibbet—always a gruesome-looking object—and on the dirty-looking portion of the bank around it, backed by an irregular row of squalid-looking, mud-coloured houses, lay a heterogeneous collection of oil tins, a decrepit native boat, old Turkish carts, a rubbish heap, and a wireless station, with a tent or two for the operators: a veritable East End. We slept on board, and with the dawn a gang of Turkish prisoners was brought down to help us unload and take our stuff to our hospital site

a mile away. This was to the N.W. of the town, and separated from the river by a grove of palm-trees. Evidence of previous enemy occupation in the shape of bits of old rag, bits of bone, and old tins, were in plenty, and the flies were flourishing both here and elsewhere; but its aspect was soon changed, and tents were erected.

The S.M.O. was anxious to hand over to us 200 or 300 sick that were clogging his field ambulances, so we did our best to "get a move on." In the evening the three of us who were fit went over to the Tessex Brigade camp, and heard tales of the recent fight and talk of the coming ad-

vance. Our fourth colleague, the "wet bob," remained in his tent with a fever, which we feared was typhoid, and we sent him down to Busra a few days later. Most of the division, we heard, had already gone on and encamped at Azizieh, fifty miles ahead, waiting for more troops and munitions, and in touch with the enemy. Kut itself was in a state of great activity, turning itself as rapidly as the water-borne traffic could allow it into an advanced base, and sorting, forwarding, hurrying on ammunition, stores, and equipment of all sorts.

All the principal houses were occupied by the busy gilded staff. Generals there seemed to be in plenty, who were soon to take an unnatural interest in the building of our new hospital, which lay on the road between the town and the camp, and so came in for very frequent visits by the Brass Hats. Our big Base Hospital tents called forth much comment, and it was not long before it was impressed upon us that such valuable canvas would not be allowed to remain so near the Front. Orders were soon received to have them struck and replaced by huts, so within ten days or so we were taking down our carefully dressed rows of tents and watching the ubiquitous R.E. put up generously designed erections of wood and matting. The work went steadily on, and for the next four or five weeks we had a busy but peaceful time. Every other day or so a convoy

of sick and wounded would arrive from Azizieh, and from time to time we sent one down the river, each time depleting our scanty staff. Our own full complement of personnel and equipment rolled up in due course, and the hospital and its work pursued the even tenor of its way. We enjoyed the planning and erection of the different parts of the two hospitals, their wards and storerooms, operating rooms and dispensaries, kitchens and bathing places, isolation wards and offices.

Troops and hospitals came steadily through us on their way to join the Division at Azizieh, and as time went on the activity on the wharves feverishly increased; work went on all night by the aid of huge flares on the river bank, which was crowded with perspiring coolies, panting backwards and forwards between huge collections of stores and the iron barges by the bank, shouting S. & T. sergeants, and worried officers, the whole constituting a thrilling but weird and ghostly picture, dimly seen through the dusty atmosphere.

One night those gallant Punjabis, so keen on football at Busra, reached Kut, full of excitement, fearful that they might be too late for the great fight to come. One of them, poor Captain T—, lay in hiding in his berth with a temperature of 105°, from an attack of malaria, and trembling with apprehension lest he should be landed and left behind. How greatly I wished he had been, when I saw his

poor body laid aside for burial on his return journey a fortnight later!

But they went on and were not too late, and they walked up to the barbed wire as if on manœuvres; but only some of them got back.

In those days, for relaxation, we would take a gun and stroll out for an hour to bag a few sand-grouse. Of these dove-like birds there are very large numbers; one could sometimes get them within 100 yards of camp, and could always be sure of a few. At times they fly about in such huge flocks that the noise of their wings and, even more, their peculiar cry, can be heard for great distances. Some good shooting can be had when they are flying down wind, for then they travel at a great pace. They are best got in the morning, when they are flying around between 8 and 11 o'clock. Or we would explore the town itself. "Kut of the Amir" is situated on the left bank of the Tigris, and built for the most part on the south and south-western part of a very complete loop of the river. East and west of it lie gardens and palm groves; opposite it, on the other bank, is the small mud village of "Woolpress."

In peace time Kut (pronounced Kōöt) is the seat of a small military post, and it ships much grain.

The town itself contains some 5000 inhabitants, mostly Arabs. The majority of the people are Mussulmans; but there are also Jews, Sabians, and Nestorian Christians. The

town consists of an extended river front, perhaps half a mile in length; and back from this and running roughly at right angles to the stream lie a series of streets at various intervals, and running more or less parallel to each other. Cross-streets between these are few and far between and very irregular. On the left, as you face the town from the river, is the Turkish "Serai," with its roomy barrack square, its Headquarters offices, and its flagstaff. Just behind it stands the mosque and the lofty minaret, famous for its graceful proportions and topped by its turquoise dome. To the right of the Serai lie the bazars, the lower and lesser one parallel to the river, the main one at right angles to this. Both are covered in by matting spread over wooden rafters, but are very inferior to those at Amarah. In the hot weather these sheltered arcades prove a welcome refuge from the fierce rays of the sun, but in winter they are dark and foul, squalid and dirty. On each side of the bazar street is a raised plinth and a row of eubicles, in which the owners squat behind their piles of wares. At night each eubicle is closed by folding wooden doors, which are securely fastened by clumsy iron-padlocked staples, and a night watchman patrols the deserted market, or sits and doses as the fancy takes him.

Farther to the right, houses and khans stretch away to the garden at the eastern end, whilst between the houses

and the river lies a strip of bare, uneven bank, that serves all the purposes of a wharf.

Scattered about here and there, but mostly towards the western end, are a few good two-storey houses, well built of brick. Each is built four-square around an inner court, upon which open verandahed rooms and the winding stairway to the roof. In the middle of the flagged courtyard is a small drain-hole leading to a large cess-pit underneath, which in very wet weather sometimes gets overfull and is not over-sweet. The poorer houses are merely larger or smaller hovels, built of mud or mud-dried brick, aided by a few poles and pieces of matting. Often several are built around a single courtyard or area, surrounded by an encircling wall, within which are generally an odd palm-tree or two, a drain and a mud oven, common to the community. Here the women sit winnowing or grinding their corn, cooking their "kabaabs," which resemble thick pancakes, or playing with their grubby and nearly naked children. Later on, when the siege was in full swing, most of these contained at least one underground dug-out, into which the poor wretches crowded during the worst bombardments. Many of the "short cuts" that were made between the parallel streets passed through these poorer quarters, and enabled one to see something of the family life of these descendants of Ishmael.

With an average depth of a quarter of a mile from the river, the town on the north side ends irregularly on the open plain between the arms of the great loop of the river. Here, in the immediate vicinity of the town, lies a tract of uneven dusty ground covered with the village refuse, rubbish heaps, dead dogs, and scores of living ones. Just beyond this zone of smelly no man's land one stumbles on a straggling graveyard, where lie the marks of those returned to dust. A few hundred yards farther stand up in bold relief a line of brick kilns, like martello towers set to watch over the little town, and only too soon to be used for this purpose on our own behalf.

November was yet young when the riparian activity reached its climax, the generalissimo and his gilded staff departed in a blaze of glory, and Kut was left, it seemed, to desolation and to us. The quiet of the place was painful. The Brigade had left, and but a few companies of infantry and half a dozen guns remained, though small batches of troops and cavalry continued to come through. Also a new and large hospital arrived, with tents enough for 500, and proceeded to settle down beside us. Work on the new Fort by the ferry near the footbridge proceeded steadily, and our hospital grew as near perfection as we could make it with the materials and labour at our command. Our Surgeon-General had seen it and approved but we hoped it would

never be put to a severe test—five or six hundred wounded might perhaps call for accommodation temporarily, but we little expected thousands.

In view of the uncertain attitude of a force of Beni Lam Arabs a few miles away under the hills, we also put in a good deal of work in preparing perimeter breast-

works and small trenches around our hospital as part of a local defence scheme, which at one time appeared likely to assume prime importance.

For the rest, we dealt with our convoys, speculated on the date of the coming battle, and waited with a none too sanguine impatience for news of the result.

IV.

Boom! boom! boom! Faintly the sound of distant guns was borne to us on the north wind. It was the 2nd of December, and, tired and hungry, we were sitting down to a late breakfast and talking inconsequently, but the unmistakable sound made us sit up and stare at each other. "By God! those are guns, F——," said one, and we were up and outside the tent in a second, listening for a repetition of the ominous sound. Boom! boom! Yes, there was no doubt about it, and all the tales and rumours of disaster we had been hearing at intervals for the past ten days suddenly seemed to take concrete form, and the ghastly truth of it all was borne in upon us. We conjured up visions of our struggling, retreating troops being pressed by a relentless foe, and having to fight hard to keep him off.

Boom! boom! they must be eight or ten miles away yet. God! what sort of a time have they had for the last sixty miles if they are still being so pressed within a mile or two

of Kut, where they mean to stand? Such the unspoken question that rises unbidden to our lips, and we seem to realise in a flash something of the past ten days' horror through which the old 6th Division has passed.

For a dreadful week we have been struggling to cope with the streams of wounded that have been poured in on us in shipload after shipload. Night and day have we all been working to tend and to pass on thousands of poor devils, masses of crumpled humanity, until our very souls are sick within us, but nothing has so brought home to us the plight of the struggling army as has this booming of the distant guns. Never shall I forget those days before the siege when the spectre of disaster walked the air and troubled our dreams, nor the way in which we first heard that anything was wrong.

Soon after the Army Commander had left us to join the division, we had begun to conjecture when the fight would take place. It will be to-day,

we would say. But the morrow would come and still no battle. Then one day, at last, news came that it had commenced; that our gallant fellows had driven the enemy out of his position; that he was being pursued. All seemed going well, and we thought of Christmas in Sinbad's City. But the next day a silence, an ominous absence of news—"had they gone on? were they in Baghdad?" But no, next day a whispered rumour, like a breath of icy cold wind, struck us dumb, and made us shiver as with an ague. "The enemy," thus it ran, "has retaken the position; there has been a night attack—heavy casualties—the division is retreating on Azizieh!" Surely 'tis merely a rumour, such cannot happen to us, to those splendid troops who have done so much! But the rumour is insistent, and presently is strengthened by orders over the wire to us to prepare for large numbers of wounded. Ill news travels fast; again that icy wind; "the army is retiring." Again word from our Medical Head—"have evacuated 3500"—the past perfect tense! where the devil shall we put them? We will send some of the boats straight through to Amarah! But the M.T.O. thinks otherwise—only one boat out of six may go through, so all the wounded on the rest must be disembarked and taken to hospital! How we can expand accommodation for 900 into that of 4000 is now the problem. We must have more tents, and tents we get, and start

pitching them for dear life. Our staffs respond to our call and work with a will, and our sections grow to the size of a complete unit, whilst the newly-arrived Stationary Hospital becomes a forest of canvas. Soon the rush comes, and we are strained to the utmost; boat after boat is unloaded; fetch and carry, accommodate and feed, examine and tend and treat, is the order of the day,—we do our best. Offers of aid by fatigues, or of carts, or in any way they can serve us, are sent in by our friends of the regiment and the battery, whilst a portion of a stranded field ambulance gives of its best. Major Dashwood of the F.A. is everywhere at once, arranging, encouraging, day and night. A huge two-decked derelict barge is commandeered, strewn with S. and T. hay, and hundreds of the slighter cases bedded down therein. Captain G—— establishes a huge "coffee stall" on the bank near the Serai, and with soup and hot milk cheers the hearts of those that are ready to perish. It is a nightmare, a week one hopes never to repeat. On one of the boats one finds a deck-load of officers, amongst them many familiar faces looking worn and pained; some of them are of those who hurried through Kut a few days ago, "fearing to be late." "And what of the others, old man?" we ask. "Oh! it's dreadful, F——, there are only two of us left; Billy's gone, Jack died yesterday, T—— and M—— this morning, Watson was killed just before the barbed

wire." "I? Oh, I had just out a couple of strands when I was bowled over."

We get to work again with a lump in the throat, and curse all war and violence and the man who started it. The second day we send away a sick convoy down the river, and with them goes the Army Commander and his Staff, but the day following we get another shock, for rumour hath it that the convoy is held up by Arabs and cannot get through.

Two companies are despatched to help, but twenty-four hours later they return, convoy and all. The same day we hear there is every chance of Kut being attacked by the Arab force which still hovers about, and we improve our defences and arm all who can hold a rifle. The last day of November brings us news that Townshend has detached a brigade, which is hurrying down to Kut, and our convoy, taking all wounded it possibly can, once more essays the passage of the river to Amarah. This time we hear no more, and they get through; but next day, at the urgent request of those who know most, we load every available craft with every patient we can send, and feel that we are on the eve of big events. The atmosphere is pessimistic—another rumour brings the disquieting news that the detached brigade has been recalled to Townshend,—what does this mean? Is it the beginning of the end, the forerunner of a tragedy? Or will they pull through?

But now the Army, or what

is left of it, is nearly here; we are hearing the guns. The "defence officer" runs in and tells us to fall in every man who can stand, and we await events with breathless interest. The guns are silent now, and an hour of suspense passes; but presently out of the dusty distance emerges the head of the retreating column, and we heave a sigh of relief. First of all arrives a mounted officer, bedraggled and overwrought, and craves some food. The while he eats voraciously, his excited tongue gives to us his own picture of the past fast-moving events. Overwrought and unstrung, he almost babbles his momentous story, and we realise something of the strain our fellows have just undergone. We forthwith set every available cook cooking as he never cooked before, whereby we may help to feed our weary comrades as soon as they arrive. And they soon begin to do so. Guns, cavalry, transport-carts, and stragglers, group by group, appear, dusty and weary, yet cheery withal, and not down-hearted. Their ground is allotted, and they are soon sitting about resting and having a snack of food or soup, which we all hasten to give them.

We of Kut are not sorry to see them. For days past we have been existing in lively expectation of being attacked, and having to turn to every man-jack of us, sick or sound, to defend ourselves for our lives' sake, for the Arabs give no quarter.

Now, so do numbers cheer one, we feel safe again, though we know we must be besieged in this horrible little mud town; and with Pepys we exclaim, "and what shall be the end of it, God knows!"

Another chum arrives, dog-tired and dirty; he has no kit save that on his back. Can I give him breakfast and a shirt? Why not a hot bath first, say I? "My dear chap," he gasps, "you save my life; I haven't had my clothes off for ten days!" One after another they roll up, and we are glad to keep our mess-tent and kitchen busy feeding them. They have had practically nothing for three days, and they are ravenous.

Only a portion of the Army, with baggage and waggons, reached Kut on the 2nd December. The main body bivouacked for the night a few miles outside, and marched in unmolested and unruffled on the

3rd, and there was a day's peace. It had been a magnificent effort, that splendid retreat on top of a hard-fought battle, and all honour is due to those who made it. Next day digging began in earnest along a line previously prepared from the fort near the ferry, and across the neck of the loop to its western arm.

Fortunately the Turk was dead-beat, and not at all ready to worry us, so that the work went on uninterrupted for two or three days. In the evening on the 4th, and during the night, there was a good deal of sniping; the bullets came whizzing over and through our tents, and one unlucky wounded man was again hit in hospital. Some of them seemed to come from the town, and doubtless did so, for it is the way of the Arab to kick those who seem to be getting the worst of it.

V.

On the 5th December the siege began in earnest, and the enemy was soon busy sending his shrapnel screaming over the western palm grove. As our hospital camp lay just beyond it, we came in for a goodly share of its attentions, and our A.D.M.S. began to look about for another site. That evening our cavalry were sent away: they stole out at night, and got through the incomplete cordon that was drawing in around us; but with their depart-

ure the door was shut, and we knew ourselves invested and cut off from the outside world.

On the 6th the shelling of our camp increased, and it became evident we should have to move. One sweet messenger of death burst over the wet bob's tent, and lumps of its case tore through his tent, smashed his box, and landed in his little dug-out. Fortunately he was not in residence at the time, but it made him think; whilst my

Indian servant, who was standing by, presently woke up to find himself running round in circles, whereat, when he had recovered, he was intensely amused. Those of us who had never been under shell fire before were inclined to take it very coolly at first. But after being nearly hit once or twice, we developed a healthy respect for an approaching shell, and ceased to take unnecessary risks.

So the Bazar was emptied of its wares and its occupants in double-quick time, and every available sweeper turned on to clean it up. That night, at 8 o'clock, we commenced to move our hospital—lock, stock, patients, and staff; and by 5 A.M. next morning we were installed in our new quarters, and had left for ever the buildings we had erected with so much thought and labour. In a very short time they had been razed to the ground and used for fire-wood.

Moving house in the dead of night was a weird experience. Fatigues were out of the question, so, with the help of a few S. and T. carts, we did it ourselves. Backwards and forwards, stumbling along over uneven and scarcely known roads and streets in the pitchy darkness, we struggled through the work and wrestled with our heavy stores and equipment. Patients went first. Giving orders that those who could walk should do so, and start at eight o'clock, and that the rest should be carried, we ate a hasty dinner

before taking part in the proceedings. Great was my surprise to find, a few minutes later, that all but a very few of my 300 had discovered their ability to move unaided, and had legged it away to the new refuge. The very few had either broken legs or were semi-moribund. Necessity is sometimes the mother of locomotion.

But we soon discovered that we had quitted the frying-pan merely to fall into the fire. It will be remembered that one portion of the Bazar runs along the river bank, whilst the other lies at right angles to it. Close by, on the bank, was one of the few possible sites for our guns, and three or four were soon established within a few yards of us. The Turks soon did their utmost to knock these out, and as a natural consequence scored a good many hits on the hospital. Within a very few days we had several casualties, both amongst the wounded and our staff, and our own escapes were narrow and numerous. We realised to our dismay that our Hospital was by no means one of the safest places in Kut, but it was secure from most rifle fire, and there was nowhere else to go, so we had to stick it.

We ourselves got quarters in a tiny Arab house a few yards away, and made ourselves comfortable enough as things went in those days. Other hospitals were no better off. The Field Ambulances found accommodation in various parts of the town, but none

could avoid the enemy's shells, and all suffered casualties from time to time. But during the first two days in our new quarters the artillery duel was of an intermittent and desultory character, and we spent our time "consolidating our position." Everybody was cheery and intensely busy; the trenches grew in depth and the parapets in height; gun emplacements were prepared, and parties of the enemy moving about within range were shelled, just to show them that we were not downhearted. "Woolpress" village across the river was occupied, and its fortification by trench digging and so forth rapidly proceeded with. It was still possible in these first days to go out on the river bank without the certainty of getting sniped—but this immunity did not last long, and five long months were to pass before one could again take the air by the old Tigris. At the river end of the Bazar a little general store shop still existed with open doors, and all day long had a crowd of eager purchasers, mostly Tommies, around it. Such looked ahead, and thought the time might come when a few extra stores would make a big difference. We secured a few for our own mess, but there came a time when we cursed ourselves bitterly for not exercising more forethought and laying in a larger stock whilst it was still available.

The little store was sold out in a couple of days, and it

never opened its shutters again, for the last time I saw it all that remained was a ragged heap of bricks.

On the 9th the Turks got busy and shelled us considerably, and some stretcher-bearers and a "bhistie" were killed in the hospitals. There was a tussle for the boat-bridge, which we held by a detachment on the far side and a force on the hither. Two officers were killed and lost, and the gallant general of the Blank Brigade made a noble effort to retrieve them that will not be forgotten by those who were there. We heard something of the story—how that alone he rushed across the bridge when he saw his youngsters fall, and endeavoured himself to carry back the one he could reach. That same night a heroic sapper and another swam the river, in itself no mean feat, and blew up the bridge from the far side, under the very noses of the enemy. This was a performance that more than merited the V.C., but, since poor Kut was never relieved, the deed is lost in unjust oblivion.

On the following day old man Turk made five separate attacks on our line, but was beaten off with loss each time, and the shelling of the town grew steadily fiercer.

In the hospitals half a dozen were killed and several wounded. Many of the townspeople were hit,—men, women, and children. So sad was it to see the poor little creatures suffering from ghastly wounds.

One little maid was led in to us, actually walking, with a huge shell-wound in the lower part of her back that had wrenched away skin and flesh and bone—yet she lived to become a hospital favourite, and was cured and playing with her companions by the end of March.

Sunrise on the 11th brought with it another fierce attack. In the midst of the pandemonium of shrieking shell and clattering rifle fire, the “muezzin,” the call to prayer of the steadfast Mussulman, rose clear and sweet from high up the minaret, above the din of human strife. One’s thoughts turned heavenward and wondered if *le bon Dieu* was noticing this ignoble squabble amongst the pigmies down below—and, if he noticed, cared!

The hospital again came in for its share; a few were wounded and the roof was set on fire, and we were coming to look upon that sort of thing as part of the day’s work. But we had plenty to do without that, for casualties steadily rolled in and kept us hard at our own peculiar and saddening job.

Day by day our foes attacked, and daily did they bombard the wretched town. We had a bad morning on the 13th, for many “whizz-bangs” found their billet in our devoted hospital. One in particular I remember, for it burst close to my office door and wounded four of my hospital staff, two of whom soon died, and could ill be spared. A

violent burst was followed by a choking cloud of fumes and of bricks and dust, through which it was difficult to find the poor moaning “bhistie” who lay huddled up with half his side blown away. We lifted him carefully and laid him aside out of the line that gun was firing on, and soon his spirit fled.

Another shell landed in our little dispensary and smashed half our bottles, and yet another came hurtling through the wall of one of the cubicles and showered its bricks and mortar all over the three poor devils who were lying there. One of these, an Indian sergeant with a broken leg, had the same leg broken again, besides a torn scalp and other wounds. To have our patients thus knocked about made us wild; it did not seem fair for them to have to go through a second mending. My office appearing to act as a magnet, it seemed to me a good idea to move it, but my little clerk, feeling comfortable and secure in his corner, with a thick wall on one danger side and bales of hay on another, was loath to leave, so I gave in; but when a day or two later another whizz-bang burst on the threshold, I had to insist on transferring it to a healthier spot. Had I not done so, I had not lived to write this, for soon afterwards a “windy Lizzie” landed plumb on the roof and burst within into a thousand pieces.

But we were full of hope and expectation of our early relief. As early as the 8th

did our General, in whom we all had sublime faith, send round his first circular to let us know that reinforcements were expected at Sheikh Sa'ad in the following week, and we presumed they would soon make their way up to us, though we gave them to

Christmas or a little longer. Six weeks, we thought, would be the outside limit. But the end of the six weeks was to come and to bring with it the first of a long series of disappointments, which were by far the hardest parts of the siege to bear.

VI.

The next week was full enough of unpleasant incidents, and the weather steadily grew colder. In the early part of it our hospital suffered a sad and serious loss in the deaths of three of our wounded staff, and our Bazar roof was again set on fire by shells. I myself had another narrow escape, but suffered nothing more than a temporary bronchitis from the fumes. Such little accidents were, however, sufficient to enable one to imagine the agony of the "gassed" in Europe, and we thanked God that Abdul had none of that villainous variety of projectile. One day a group of warrant officers, who were lunching together in their dug-out, was scattered, and killed or maimed by a "windy Lizzie" that landed fairly on the roof and burst amongst them inside. One, more lucky than the rest, was killed outright; two others, or what remained of them, died very soon; but the rest we managed to patch up. Shells are gross and clumsy things, and the wounds they make are terrible. The poor human body has no chance. They bash it, they

tear it and mangle it; they wrench away brutally great chunks of it, and leave a battered quivering thing, which to look upon gives one almost physical pain. They are indelicate and beastly in their blind, blundering rage. To the surgeon, such indiscriminate violence is intensely abhorrent; the clumsy damage to the beautiful, perfected human organism makes his professional spirit wince, and the ruthless disregard of anatomical detail, and the smashing up of nicely balanced interdependent organs, rouses his ire. He sees and pities the poor suffering man, —but more, he imagines and weeps for the hidden molecular shock to the ultimate particles of that bone, muscle, nerve, and brain that but a moment before were instinct with pulsating and marvellous life. At such moments as these the "doctor man" curses all war and the economic necessities that bring it about, and he wonders at all the farcical talk and controversy over explosive and dum-dum bullets whilst the effects of shell fire are tolerated without a murmur.

Often he wishes it were his lot to see more of the excitement and glory of the game, and less of the soul-sickening sights that, in their cumulative effects, weary him to death and sometimes threaten to overwhelm him with depression. Of hard work and innumerable surgical operations there was of course more than enough, and the siege was many days old before we could snatch a few minutes for a "breather" away from the "wards." When I did so it was to take a hurried stroll through the town and around part of its outskirts to the north with the incorrigible Major Dashwood of the Punja Brigade Ambulance, whose chief delight it was in these days to prowl around finding out all the danger zones in the immediate neighbourhood, and then to hale his friends away thither and point them out by personal demonstration.

It was a dreary sight just outside the loopholed walls of the last houses and gardens. In the foreground a flotsam and jetsam of *débris*, rubbish, a dead horse or mule or two with their legs in the air, an old cart, and a row of gunlimbers sheltering under a wall; in the middle distance the brick kilns, like giant truncated sugar-loaves, standing out boldly above the surrounding plain, and to their left a slight ridge, marking the site of our middle line of trenches. Around the foot of the kilns could be seen a mound or two, and some irregularities in the ground indicating some

of our gun-pits, to improve which the gunners were working hard. Two or three of the kilns had been turned into observation towers, and the heads and telescopes of the watchers could just be seen silhouetted above their rims. Yonder, a mile and a half away, the outline of the Fort stood out slightly on the skyline, and between us and it no sign of life was visible—a sense of desolation brooded over the deserted flat—but the crackling of rifles, the bursting of shells, and the ping of bullets as they passed overhead, or the sharp "pat" of one as it landed on a wall, were conclusive evidence of the activities of the rival forces that had gone to ground. And so back to our little mess of four in a small Arab house in A1 Street, there to meet other one or two who have come in to smoke a pipe and exchange the latest "gup." 'Tis said, we hear, in the Bazar that some of the enemy are trekking away northward. Good news! say we, but why? Are the Russians getting a move on at Kermanshah, or is it a mere canard? The latter, of course, is the truth; but, like drowning men, we eagerly catch at any straw, and at any rate it serves as food for the endless discussions on the prospects of our relief. But in these days there was little time for talk and discussion, or for aught but hard work. The hospital was full, and casualties steadily came along, either from the shelling or the continuous

sniping or from the attacks on the trenches.

Usually at night there was a violent fusillade of rifle fire, and day by day the Turks sapped closer.

The General frequently visited the hospitals, but invariably found us busy in our operating theatre, mending some poor unfortunate, and so passed along. He would smile with the Indians and chat with Tommy, and cheer him up with his own splendid optimism, and every one felt the better for his visits.

The General's dog appeared to have a rooted objection to shells. I was walking with him one day along one of the streets when presently overcame a 4-inch and burst with a clatter near by; the little terrier didn't wait for permission, but, much to his master's annoyance and disgust, whisked round, and incontinently skeddaddled for home as fast as his legs would carry him, and this habit he could by no means be broken of.

On the 18th our mess was reduced to three, for "Lancelot" went sick and to hospital for a few days, but medical society is a co-operative one by instinct, and there was no lack of offers of help to make up for his loss. The same day witnessed that brilliant little sortie from the trenches by some of our men at the Fort, which resulted in the bayonetting of a good thirty Turks, and the taking of a few prisoners, with little or no loss to ourselves.

Within a week of Christmas

we began to dwell on thoughts of home. What were they thinking of Kut? Did they know yet that we were beleaguered, and were they worrying about us? God forbid! Should we be relieved by Christmas? Some thought so, but the most likely conjecture seemed to be January 10—another three weeks!

Hearing one day that there were a lot of letters of sorts at the post-office still undelivered, Dashwood and I wended our way thither to see. Doleful and dreary were the postmen and their stifled charge; it was bad luck indeed to be boxed up and find themselves out of a job. A few shells and an unhealthy number of snipers' bullets had rendered their first-floor office, which looked out on the river bank, a most undesirable residence, and there was a goodly litter of unclaimed letters and parcels, mostly addressed to our friends outside, or to those who had already joined the great majority. A parcel of cigarettes was a welcome find, but we got no letters, and went away with our hopes dashed, and a grouch against the fate that interfered with the last mail that should have reached us before the investment.

At dawn on the 20th we awoke to the scream of a shell passing close over the mess and the sound of a brisk fusillade. It resulted in the usual bunch of casualties; two or three were killed in one of the field ambulances, and our water pump hose-pipe was riddled by shrapnel.

One poor devil of a servant sitting cleaning plates for his master's breakfast got in the way of a shell and lost both his legs, and his life soon afterwards. Some one in some little Indian village would wait in vain for his return, till his name became but a memory of the time when the sahib-log went mad.

Succeeding this outburst came a period of comparative calm, which led up to the great storm on the 24th, and was devoid of incident save for an issue of "strawberry" jam in our ration and for the opening of the wireless for private cables. There was, of course, a rush to send messages, and the good-tempered staff-major, who had lightly undertaken the job of receiving them, found he had let himself in for more work than he bargained for.

But the capacity of the wireless was limited, and it had to be used with care, so that it took many days for some of the wires to get away. What a blessing that wireless was! Thereby we scored heavily over the besieged of the old days; for though the enemy cordon was drawn tight and all material communication was cut off, yet they could not stop our talking to the outside world, and brief

news of the progress of Armageddon, of the doings of our people, of the Relieving Force, and of home affairs, continued to find its way in.

So we got our Reuters—an abbreviated edition, it is true, but still Reuters—and copies were supplied on any old pieces of paper to Heads of units, and were posted up at G.H.Q. They made a great difference to us, for they enabled us to follow the world's events, properly discounted, to feel ourselves less cut off from all that mattered, and to keep alive the expectancy of early relief.

We of the medical world were faced with an added anxiety, for that bugbear of surgeons, Tetanus, raised its ugly head in a few isolated cases. Confined as we were in a dirty Eastern town, unable to get access to the fresh air, with a lot of animals and with a limited supply of antitoxin, the possibility of a serious extension of this dread disease caused us some unhappy hours. Fortunately our A.D.M.S., with his usual forethought, had already some time before wired for more of the precious fluid to come by aeroplane. The cases remained limited to a few, and to our relief the danger passed.

VII.

After a night of incessant firing, Christmas Eve was ushered in by a furious onslaught on the Fort and an intense bombardment of the town, which continued through-

out the whole day. A whole division of Turks swarmed around the Fort, and the fighting was fast and furious for hours.

The Fort, situated on the

extreme right of our line across the peninsula, close to the river and at the western end of the Mohammed Abdul Hassan bend, was an enclosure some 150 yards square, at a guess, surrounded by a thick ten-foot-high mud wall. This was loopholed in every direction, and at one angle it projected 20 yards or so to form a bastion. On the internal surface of the walls were fire-steps, and shelters, or barracks, for the garrison. To these were added trenches, traverses, and dug-outs of all sorts and directions. Outside a good deal of barbed wire had been set up, but the enemy had sapped pretty close. Frequent bombardments of the tiny place had knocked it about a good deal, and the violent shelling on Christmas Eve played sad havoc with the walls. But in spite of it all, the gallant garrison put up a great fight, and held the place for England. The Turks did their best to rush it, and came on gallantly in swarms, struggling over the rough ground, stumbling through and over the wire, and being shot down in hundreds. They reached and took the bastion. Clambering over such walls as were left, they drove our men back and through the second line of defence that had been built across the base of the projection. This was all they could manage, and they were not allowed to stay there for long. A few hours later the gallant Blank and Downshires counter-attacked and drove them out, and no enemy

ever set foot therein again until the end of the siege. Abdul had lost very heavily indeed, and he never attempted a similar attack in force. Our own casualties during that fateful 24th were of course considerable, though but a fraction of those sustained by the attacking Turks, which were numbered in thousands.

We in the town had our own particular trouble in the form of a very heavy bombardment, which spoilt the architectural beauties of the place very considerably. The hospitals, as usual, came in for a goodly share. Two sergeants in one hospital and three stretcher-bearers in another were killed and several were wounded, but none was hurt in our own. Amongst other losses in the town that day were three officers whom we could ill spare. Our popular senior gunner was standing with two others on H.Q. roof watching the play of the guns. As luck would have it, a Turkish shell fell right in the middle of the group. Captain B—— was killed outright, the Colonel's leg and elbow were broken, and G——t was also hit. In both cases the wounds were to prove fatal. In characteristic fashion the great-hearted Colonel refused to be carried below, but, with the aid of a comrade's shoulder, hopped down the winding stair despite the agony of his dangling leg.

His death a few days later cast a gloom over us all, for

his genial, hearty spirit was a greatly valued asset.

It was a memorable Christmas Eve, and one none of us is likely easily to forget it. We were ourselves desperately busy. Fortunately Lancelot was back at work again, and "Trixie" and the "wet bob" got through a tremendous amount. The "wet bob" had been unfortunate enough to get back from Busra after his illness just in time to be caught for the siege—a bit of bad luck he is now, I doubt not, bitterly regretting amongst the hills of Asia Minor.

Christmas Day dawned quiet and peaceful, and remained so throughout. No gun was fired, and scarcely a rifle-shot disturbed the almost uncanny silence.

Was it due to exhaustion, or were both sides, we asked ourselves, loath to desecrate by violence the birthday of the Saviour of mankind, the great Prophet of Peace? Be that as it may, the day was calm and extraordinarily restful, and the Padre held his two services without interruption. For the Medicals, of course, there was no rest, and we could get to neither of them. For us of the healing art the aftermath of strife means an abundance of work. It is for us to mitigate, as far as in us lies, the pitiable suffering, and to reconstruct to the best of our power some of the damaged fabric from the brawl of the yesterday.

For our Christmas dinner we had carefully nurtured a

duck, bought in the very early days; and Lancelot having likewise carefully preserved a birthday plum-pudding sent him by a fond mother, produced it to match the bird, "so all merrie" after a strenuous day. Our thoughts flew homeward. What were they doing in the old country?—surely at times thinking of beleaguered little Kut, and the boys it contained. Doubtless as we sat around our deal table, covered by a hospital sheet, in a smudgy, squalid Arab cottage, and raised our glasses in silent toast to those we loved, they were doing the same in the cosy rooms of the dear homeland. We had planned a very different celebration of the feast. "Christmas in Baghdad" was often on our lips in the autumn, and visions had been conjured up of festive boards in the old Caliph's capital. But the reality was "Christmas in Kut," and a very different one at that; and as for Baghdad, our chances of seeing it had gone by the board. "For," said we, "when we are relieved they'll give us a rest, and we shall go down the river, whilst the other fellows go up and get the glory, and the flesh-pots of Sinbad's city." But we were wrong again! We were to see Baghdad without the flesh-pots, and they were destined for many hard knocks.

The 26th was also quiet. The enemy was seen to be moving his guns. Why, we could only conjecture; probably because of the threatening aspect of the weather; the

sky was overcast, and rain would render his movements difficult or impossible.

The 28th saw a special order published to let us know that the Relief Force would start from Ali Gharbi on January the 3rd, and a counterblast in the rumour that the Turks were receiving reinforcements. That night was, I remember, rendered hideous by a lot of blind shelling on the part of our enemy. Lying exposed to shell fire at night is an unpleasant business, and mud-brick walls seem but a poor protection against a hurtling 50-lb. missile. You try to doze off, but are intermittently awakened by the "sizzing" scream of an approaching "obus." You cook up an interested ear to judge whether you are exactly in the line of its flight or not, and if you are, and you have no dug-out, you await its fall with still greater interest, which is equalled by your relief when it bursts clear or lands with a "wump" in a neighbouring mud-hut. The next evening we had a mild practical demonstration of what happens when you *are* exactly in the line. I had turned in early with bad "growing pains" and a temperature. The others sat in the mess-room close by, with a couple of visitors. A "whizz-bang" came hissing through our mud wall, through the roof of our servants' quarters, scattering segments right and left, and filling our little courtyard and our rooms with its poisonous fumes. We were out in a second to investigate the

damage—they thought it was I who must be done in, but the only casualty was one of the slaves with a bullet in his thigh. Our visitors postponed the telling of their yarns and removed to a healthier spot. These "whizz-bangs" are annoying little beasts; they give no warning of their coming, and are on you before you have a chance to move.

Very different was the mode of approach of a new kind of missile our friends over the way sent at us a week or two later. This took the form of a huge, spherical, bronze cannon-ball, about 15 inches in diameter, filled with bullets the size of walnuts. From a short range of a couple of thousand yards or less, it came buzzing over from the far side of the river, for all the world like a huge beetle. It burst on percussion with a loud bang into a thousand fragments, the larger of which could be followed with ease by the naked eye as they sailed through the air like cricket-balls. From collected pieces of the casing, which was of solid bronze and about an inch in thickness, it was possible to reconstruct the whole sphere, and to imagine the sort of engine of destruction it was fired from. Probably it was some ancient cannon or mortar dug out from a century-old sleep in Baghdad; it was used perhaps in the city's successful defence against the mighty Nadir Shah, near two hundred years ago.

The last few days of the old year passed fairly quietly,

save for bursts of firing in the trenches from time to time, a morning and evening "hate," and the everlasting sniping. This accursed sniping took its steady toll of life in the streets of the town and from amongst the water-carriers, who ran down to the edge of the bank at night—and these were mostly women; from our working parties and from all others who went to and fro; and lastly, and so sadly, from the children as they played. Our own snipers were as constantly at work. They were posted at all points of vantage, mostly on house-tops, and by their efforts kept the enemy's fire within reasonable limits.

New Year's Eve found our own little group none too cheery. We were dog-tired: myself peevish and irritable with fever and muscular rheumatism, three of our colleagues sick, and our hospitals filled to overflowing.

It was getting colder than

ever, and pneumonia was becoming serious amongst the troops.

But good news of the Russians filtered through and cheered us up—how they were at Kermanshah, and pressing on to harry the Osmanli. Our own people also, it seemed, must be nearly ready; another week or so and we should be joining hands with them, and our confinement would be ended. So does hope spring eternal in the human breast—but sometimes, as one expressed it, something goes wrong with the springs!

However, we were seldom depressed. Our third member, "Trixie," was invariably cheerful, and his sunny smile and unfailing good-humour were an invaluable asset to us when the novelty of being besieged wore off and the days grew longer. Our No. 4, like Martha, was troubled about many things, and had little use for sieges.

VIII.

The New Year opened quietly, but was scarcely two days old when a virulent bombardment suddenly started late in the afternoon. As luck would have it, our hospital seemed to be specially signalled out for punishment at the hands of some guns placed in a new position straight across the river, to the left of Woolpress village and the liquorice factory. Shell after shell burst in our little grain-selling courtyard behind our main Bazar.

Around this covered-in yard were arranged several beds, and opening out of it were little dark hovels which we had turned into wards with from two to six beds in each. The little round hole in the roof of each we had enlarged for light and air. These formed the Indian officers' wards, after their previous ward in the old coffee-shop by the river, which also formerly accommodated our hospital office, had been evac-

uated. But in spite of it all no one was seriously hurt, though two men had a most marvellous escape. One "whizz-bang" burst in the doorway of the smallest "ward," in which they were lying, and one of the two had his head within a foot of the door. Though untouched by the shell fragments, his clothes, bed, and blankets were riddled by the iron segments, and the drums of both ears were burst! The other man, similarly, was not touched, but his water-bottle and belts hanging near his head were smashed to bits.

Our guns, of course, replied, and added to the din. Within half an hour the enemy's fire slackened and died away, but they had managed to plunk in a couple of hundred messages of hate before they were got under.

On the 3rd we got the first shower of rain, which was to cause us so much discomfort in the near future. It was very cold, and fuel was getting very scarce, but our greatest trouble at this time were the myriads of lice that infested clothes and bedding. Our wretched patients would sit for hours picking them off their blankets and shirts, or rather killing them *in situ*, choosing, if possible, a patch of sunlight to do it in, though this was difficult to find in our covered-in Bazar. We ourselves, too, became, from constant practice, quite expert in the arts of spotting and catching them. The plague of lice lasted until the beginning of spring, when they almost

uncannily disappeared with the coming of the warmth. But hard on their heels marched, or rather jumped, an army of *pulices irritantes*, which, though less numerous than their pale-bodied predecessors, far exceeded them in their agility and biting powers. But it is the way of the East ever to provide each season with its special pest wherewith to irritate and chide its human guests. If it be not lice, then it's fleas, and if not fleas, then mosquitoes; failing mosquitoes, or in addition thereto, the sand-fly is provided. If a much-prayed-for wind springs up and blows them away, it brings with it a dust-storm and chokes you, or it blows so swiftly over a sun-baked desert that it scorches you and heats you till your head is like to burst. And if for some unaccountable reason none of these pests is in the ascendant, there is always the snake, the centipede, or the scorpion to fall back upon. And over and above all is the common fly, to whom, I suppose, in his myriads, pride of place should be given, for his numbers in the East sometimes are almost incredible to those who have not experienced him, and his persistence wears one out. Never have I felt more grateful to any nation, I think, than to the Japanese when I came across the clockwork fly-catcher which they have introduced. It is good to watch its syrup-smear'd cylinder revolving inexorably and taking to their inevitable death thousands of your buzzing enemies.

About this date, too, our

fresh meat, of an ordinary kind, gave out, and "bully" became the order of the day. All these things, however, lost their importance, and were overshadowed by the suspense in which we were held for the next week or two regarding the movements of the Relieving Force. Younghusband's Brigade was supposed to have started from Ali el-Gharbi (el Gharbi=the west), and we hoped soon to hear of it farther up. Day by day we had seen column after column of Turks going down to Sinn, and doubtless beyond, to meet our fellows, and we knew there must be many thousands of them down there dug in and awaiting our onslaught. We knew, too, they had strengthened their Ess Sinn position, but we never doubted the ability of the Relieving Force to get through, and were quite prepared to see Aylmer and Townshend shaking hands in the time-honoured way, and according to Cocker, before another ten days had gone by. They told us, too, of greetings from Russia's Grand Duke to our Army Commander, and his expressed hope of meeting him soon in person. Reuters meanwhile talked of some sort of compulsion at home, and of the thousands of bachelors still outside the Colours, and also, worse luck, of the sinking of the *Persia*, doubtless with mails for us on board.

Lancelot now fell sick again, and reduced our mess to three; but the fiery Hepaton, whose quarters were unpleasantly near some of the guns, spent

much of his time with us. Poor friend Lambert continued to run a temperature, and developed a lingering typhoidal illness which was to lead him to a much-lamented death. But the work went on; when one dropped out, those who were left took on his job. One came to realise that no man is essential; one knew that if he had to lay down his burden and join the great majority, another would take it up and carry on until his turn, may be, came too. Life is immortal, its holders are but temporary.

This first week saw the death of that very gallant gunner Colonel, the genial Irishman whom the whole force loved. In solemn procession we laid him to rest to the fitting sound of guns and snipers' rifles, which mingled their cruel voices with the Padre's solemn tones.

For the cemetery a small field or garden near the outskirts of the town had been set apart. It was enclosed by a low mud wall, and it contained a few scattered palm-trees. Beneath their shade soon grew a rapidly spreading forest of small wooden crosses, and the padres were never at rest. At the gap in the wall that served as a gate a sentry was placed to guard the sanctity of the place, and to preserve these crosses from the attentions of the village robbers. The loneliness of those we left there always impressed me. I thought of the time to come when Kut would no longer be a bone of contention,

nor be garrisoned by British troops. Then we should be obliged to leave them, these many good fellows, to sleep their long sleep away from their native heath and those that loved them; to turn to dust in alien soil and amongst a hostile people. . . .

One evening Trixie and I strolled forth to look up our Punjabi friends of "soccer" fame. We found them doing their "week in" in a palm grove on the outskirts of the town. Passing the sentry by the hole in the wall, we came upon their camp. But it resembled a rabbit-warren more than aught else. The whole enclosure was a mass of underground dug-outs, separated by narrow surface paths along which a few of the men were moving about in pursuance of their lawful occasions, but most of them were just coming up out of their holes, booted and spurred and about to fall in.

The Colonel we found in the underground mess—a fairly capacious cavern, with a roof of corrugated iron and sandbags, supported by wooden props. He and a subaltern were the only two left of the original crowd that had brought up a fine regiment two short months ago. We had but time to drink him "good luck" before he was off with his men to take their turn in the trenches. "We're going into the middle line," he said; "worse luck! for they're not half so comfy and safe as the first line; we get all the 'overs' in the middle and lose a good many men. So we do

here from snipers' bullets, which are continually dropping amongst us."

Late at night on the 5th there was suddenly a terrific burst of firing—rifle, star-shell, bomb, and gun—so that we thought they must have launched another heavy attack on the first line. It lasted for an hour, and a good many shells were sent into the town also, and then died away. Next morning it appeared that no attack had "materialised." They had either got the "wind up," or merely wished to show us that there were plenty of them still there, in spite of the thousands that had trekked down-river to deal with Aylmer. These nocturnal bursts of firing were events of frequent occurrence, for the two lines of trenches were now very close to each other—twenty or thirty yards in some places—and both sides were always on the *qui vive*. The Turks often loosed off many thousands of rounds for no apparent reason. Sometimes we replied, but always with one eye on our stock of ammunition.

On the 10th the town suffered another severe "evening hate," and my new office again narrowly escaped destruction; but the 40-pounder proved to be a "dud," and buried itself in the Hospital Quarterguard opposite. Later on, when doing a night round after "lights out," I came across three of the guard calmly sleeping over the precious missile, fatefully ignoring, as is the way of these children of the unchanging East, the chance of its chang-

ing its mind and blowing them to bits. I carefully preserved one of these "duds" for some days, in the hope of getting a gunner to draw its fang, but they weren't for it, and advised its speedy removal to the river. So this, to my regret, had to be done, and at the dead of a dark night it was consigned to a watery grave. But the 9th brought us great news, and the town was all agog. The R.F., the Relieving Force, had beaten the enemy at Sheikh Sa'ad, so the report said, the Turks were retreating, and our people were pursuing them, albeit "slowly," owing to the bad going. Although we had had rain and we knew what silt soil was like when it is wet, yet we didn't altogether like that word "slowly"; it suggested "fatigue" and difficulties. And when the evening came and with it a rumour that we were to be put on "half rations," our optimism got a shock and we felt that the success was not an unqualified one. Next day there was no news, and the weather was vile. It was damp and wet and cold; the roads, or rather unmade lanes, were indescribably muddy and sloppy, and one slipped, splashed, and slithered rather than walked. There was no fuel save for the barest necessities, the sky was overcast, and the outlook grey and miserable. Our "Lancelot" fell sick again, this time with an illness that was to keep him away from us for nearly three months, and poor Lambert was worse. Huddled up in our thickest clothes, we considered

and reconsidered our prospects, conjectured and guessed at what was happening down below; surmised and supposed, and, generally, went through the first of those periods of trying suspense which we were later to become so familiar with from their frequent repetition.

Restless and stiff, I took a walk to the "East End" by the "A" short cut, to exchange a word with Gasbard and the "Fat Boy" of the Rajputs, who were quartered down there, and to gain their roof, like Sister Anne, and look around.

Of these alley-ways or "short cuts" through the town from east to west, four or five had been made. They were labelled alphabetically. Each one had its appropriate letter stuck up on a board at corners or difficult turns, to keep one to the right track. "A" road passed along the south-west or riverside Bazar throughout its length, and then dived through a maze of "khans," stables, private houses, and passages, until it ended in the palm grove in the S.E. of the town. It was the weirdest road. The khan, or inn, was a dirty yard surrounded by a verandah, from which led off rooms or stables as the needs of the moment demanded. Crossing it, you cut across the corner of a small hovel which in these days was used to stable a friendly old flea-bitten Arab pony, whose unhappy death in April, under the orders of the Food Controller, we all lamented.

Leaving the stable, you passed through a nondescript court on into the courtyard of the R.E. Headquarters, where, if you nosed about, you would find yourself amongst the bomb-makers, with their jam-tins and old nails; the mortar manufacturers, the makers of Roman catapults and other improvised engines of destruction, of scaling-ladders and carpentry of all sorts, and a hundred other evidences of the sleepless activity of the engineers. Leaving them you passed through an open piece of ground shielded from transfluvial snipers by a wall, and full of elaborate dug-outs prepared by the pioneers. Thence the road dipped to cross a weak spot and avoid the attentions of the enemy on the far bank. Up again to ground-level, you passed through some Tommies' quarters, and then dived below one of the main streets. Climbing up on the far side of this you found yourself in the chambers of some Turkish baths, domed and vaulted like a cathedral crypt, and nearly as dark, but now fitfully illuminated by the crude oil lights, or the cooking fires of the Hindu bearers who lived there. Another dip beneath another road brought you to the living-rooms of a house occupied by the Rajputs, and near your journey's end, for across the next street lay the mess, and those you came to see. And so up to the flat roof, by the usual winding stair in the wall of the usual courtyard. The house-top was some twenty-five feet square,

and around three sides of it was a four-foot brick wall. On the fourth or eastern side, a palisade of sheet zinc of the same height had been erected, with a few sandbags around its loophole. The walls were loopholed at intervals of three yards or so, for the convenience of our snipers and observers. Two or three snipers were always on duty here. Each sat on a brick or two close by his loophole, with his eye glued to a telescope. Within reach of his hand he had spare ammunition, and by his side lay an accumulating heap of empty cartridge cases. From time to time the short "plock" of a rifle rang out, as one or other of them spotted an exposed head in the trenches opposite, and loosed off at it.

This particular roof was one of the highest in the place, and commanded a good view of the rest of the town and of the river and the country round about. Immediately below, on the river side, lazed the few "mahelas" that still remained in our hands, and straight across the stream was the mouth of the Shatt-el-Hai, that connecting link between Tigris and Euphrates, which it joins near Suk esh-Shiukh, the residence of the spiritual head of those followers of John the Baptist, the Sabæans.

At this time of the year "the Hai" is nearly dry, but with the coming of the rains it fills up, and is navigable for large native craft for some months, or until the snow-water flood has died away.

On either side of its mouth,

and extending along the bank of the main river nearly to "Woolpress" or the liquorice factory village, could be made out the Turkish trenches. In them we could just see the Turks and Arabs as they moved about and passed by small gaps in their parapet. Farther up lay the village, occupying a quarter of a mile or so of bank opposite the west end of Kut, and consisting of a hundred or so flat-roofed mud houses and the factory chimney. Beyond it, again, bare river-bank and more trenches. Away to the west, on the skyline, could easily be seen the great white camp of the Turks at Shamran, as well as the masts and funnels of two or three of their boats, including the smart-looking monitor *Firefly*, with its tall "wireless" mast, which we lost at Ctesiphon.

Between their camp and the Sinn ridge on the right bank ran a raised road, and traffic along it could usually be seen; sometimes a camel-train, sometimes a straggling column of wounded coming from down below, but always something.

To the north-east the curving river pursued its tortuous way to Megasis Fort and beyond, whilst thirty miles or so away the snow-clad peaks of the Pusht-i-Kuh stood out, milky pink in the evening sunset. Northwards we looked down on a heterogeneous collection of flat house-tops of all shapes and sizes, with here and there a watcher gazing earnestly through a telescope, or an Arab woman busied with domestic

duties. Out beyond them, in the middle distance, our gun-pits and the brick kilns, and farther still, the open and deserted plain stretching away to our front line and the Fort.

All this through the loopholes, for it did not do to show a head above the wall; the enemy snipers at 500 yards made far too pretty practice at anything showing above the top. But it was good to sit up there for a bit and vie with the sparrows and sand-grouse in their enjoyment of God's good air. Gasbard, too, was a wit of no mean parts, and often wiled away a pleasant hour with his fairy stories and comic anecdotes, so that the roof became a popular resort and a welcome refuge from the *ennui* of the daily round. Often "of an evening," as the weeks went by and the days grew warmer, did we sit there watching the evening hate and the Turks' attempts to hit the guns on the bank below us.

The 11th passed silently, but on the 12th a message told us that it had been a big action at Sheikh Sa'ad; that the enemy had lost 4500 men and two guns, as well as prisoners and deserters, and that we were following them up. But in the usual way our own losses were left to the imagination, and we guessed they were not inconsiderable. General Nixon, the message continued, had relinquished the army command through ill health. However, the news that our people had given the Turk a good hard knock

cheered us greatly, and one man even drew upon his imagination so far as to see shells bursting over the Ess Sinn position.

The 14th brought us more particulars of the great defeat and retreat of the enemy, and the over-sanguine ones saw the smoke of our ships in the distant east.

All day long a straggling column of the enemy's camels and men passed by, just out of range, on the right bank, on their way up to Shamran. They appeared to be wounded, and, so, very tangible evidence of a big "strafe" somewhere. Late in the afternoon a column of some 5000 Turks, with guns, was descried in the east, going north-west, so we persuaded ourselves that our deliverance was near, though the Turks, as an antidote, hurled a lot of their spherical shells at us just to show that they were not downhearted.

We were all very cheery, and "Relief" was on every one's lips,—what mattered it that the rations had sunk to a half and the cruse of oil had failed? An order came

out, too, that no Arab was allowed outside his house after 5 P.M., on pain of being shot at sight, and the whole garrison was standing to arms. So the air was tense with excitement, and we waited with what patience we could command for the next development. But the 15th was silent, and that force of 5000 Turks came down again on the other side of the river. On the 16th it leaked out that our people were only just this side of Wady, had lost a good many in a second battle, and were not likely to get on; and the next day the official blow fell.

D.H.Q. issued a *communiqué* to the effect that, owing to losses and bad weather, the Relieving Force could not get on, and the troops were exhorted to patience against the arrival of more reinforcements. So we reluctantly came to the conclusion that the end was not in sight, and that it was up to us to go on sticking it for yet a week or two. With a sigh of disappointment and a muttered damn, we turned each to his job and "carried on."

(To be continued.)

WET BOBS.

BY "BARTIMEUS," AUTHOR OF 'NAVAL OCCASIONS.'

A FLURRY of sleet came out of the East, where a broad band of light was slowly widening into day.

The tarpaulin cover to the after-hatchway was drawn aside as if by a cautious hand, and the rather sleepy countenance of the Young Doctor peered out into the dawning. An expression of profound distaste spread over it, and its owner emerged on to the quarter-deck. There he stood shivering, looking about him with the air of one who found the universe at this hour a grossly overrated place.

The scene was familiar enough, to him at all events. On all sides lay line upon line of anchored battleships brooding in a kind of sullen majesty, with stripped decks, stark as gladiators, and seen thus in a comfortless half-light, sombre and terrible. The barren islands compassing them on all sides, the snow-powdered hills in the far distance, the restless crying of the gulls above a grey sea, all combined to heighten the desolation of the scene.

The Staff Surgeon turned up the collar of his great-coat, pulled his cap down until it gave him the appearance of a sort of Naval "Artful Dodger," and walked gloomily to the port gangway. The Officer of the Watch, who was partaking of hot cocoa in the

shelter of the after super-structure, sighted this forlorn object.

"'Morning, Pills," he shouted. "She's called away: won't be long now." He wiped his mouth and came across the deck to where the other was standing. "Fine morning for a pull," he observed, throwing his nose into the air and sniffing like a pointer. "Smell the heather? Lor! it does me good to see all you young fellow-me-lads turning up here bright and early with the roses in your cheeks——"

The Young Doctor turned a gambooge-tinted eye on the speaker.

"Dry up," he said acidly.

The Officer of the Watch was moved to unseemly mirth. "Where's your crew, Pills? I don't like to see this hanging-on-to-the-slack the first morning of the training season. You're too easy-going for a cox, by a long chalk, my lad. You ought to be going round their cabins now with a wet sponge, shouting 'Wet Bobs!' and 'Tally-ho!' and all the rest of it."

"Dry up!" was the reply.

"An even temper, boundless tact, a firm manner, and an extensive vocabulary — those were the essentials of the cox of a racing-boat when I was a lad at College. Why did they make you cox, Pills?"

"'Cos I'm light," retorted the Doctor. "'Cos I'm a damn fool," he added with a sudden access of bitterness. "Look here, Tweedledee, what about this bloomin' boat? Here I've been standing for the last five minutes — ah, there she is." He gazed distastefully at the lower boom, where two members of the galley's crew were casting off the painter that secured the boat to the Jacob's ladder.

"Now then," said a loud and cheerful voice at their elbows, "where's this boat we've been hearing such a lot about?" A tall, athletic figure in football shorts, and swathed about with many sweaters, with a bright-red cushion under his arm, stood gazing in the direction of the lower boom. "Well, I'm blowed," he said. "Not alongside *yet*. You're a nice person, Pills, to leave the organisation of a racing-boat's crew to." He looked round the quarter-deck. "Where're all the others? Lazy hogs! Here we are, with the sun half over the foreyard, and the boat not even manned."

The Surgeon eyed him severely. "You're none too smart on it yourself, Bunje. Where's Thorogood? Where's Number One? Where's Gerard? Where's — Ah, now they're coming."

A sleepy-eyed procession, athletically clad, but not otherwise conveying an impression of vast enthusiasm in the venture, trooped up the hatchway and congregated in

a shivering group at the gangway.

"When I go away pulling," said the First Lieutenant, apparently addressing a watchful-eyed gull volplaning past with outstretched wings,—"when I go away pulling, I like to get straight into the boat, shove off and start right in. It's this hanging about——"

"It's Tweedledee's fault," protested the coxswain bitterly. "I wrote it down last night on the slate. He's too busy guzzling cocoa to attend to his job, that's the truth of the matter. Are we all here now, anyway . . .?" He scanned the faces of his little band of heroes. "Derreck," he said suddenly; "now, where's Derreck? Really this is just about the pink limit. How could any one——?"

"Hullo, hullo, hullo!" The form of the Engineer Lieutenant emerged from the superstructure and came skipping towards them. "Sorry, everybody! Am I late? My perishing servant forgot to call me. And then I couldn't find my little short pants. Tweedledee, I've just been having a lap at your cocoa! The Quartermaster said it was getting cold."

"Not mine," replied the Officer of the Watch. "I've finished mine. You've probably drunk the Commander's. He put it down for a minute."

The face of the Engineer Lieutenant grew suddenly anxious. "Well, what about getting into the boat and shoving off. What are we all standing about getting cold for? I vote we have a jolly

good pull, too. Stay away for half an hour or so, eh?"

The long slim galley came at length alongside under the manipulation of the two rather apathetic members of the galley's crew, and the Officers' racing crew descended the accommodation-ladder and took possession of her."

"Now then," said the young Doctor, "sort yourselves out. Number One stroke, Gerrard bow, Bunje——"

"I'm going bow," said the Engineer Lieutenant. "I pulled bow at Keyham for two years, and in China——"

"If you stand there kagging¹ we'll never get away," interposed the coxswain, "and the Commander will want to know who drank his cocoa. Bunje, second stroke; James, third stroke; Derreck, you're second bow; and Tweedledum, third bow; and for heaven's sake sit down and stop gassing all of you."

Thorogood leaned forward and extended a stretcher for inspection. "How the devil am I to pull with a stretcher like this, Pills?" he demanded. "It'll smash before we've gone a yard."

"When I was at Keyham," said the Engineer Lieutenant, slopping water over the canvas parcelling on his oar in a professional manner, "we used to have stretchers made with——"

"We don't want to hear about Keyham," said the First Lieutenant, "we want to get to work. Shove the perishing thing away, James, and

stop chawing your fat. If it's good for Nelson it's good enough for you."

"Do we start training in earnest to-day?" demanded the India-rubber Man, gloomily rubbing his calves, "because I don't mind admitting that I like to start gradually. 'Another Little Drink Won't do Us Any Harm' sort of spirit."

"We shan't start at all if Double-O Gerrard doesn't find that blessed boat-hook an' shove her off soon," retorted the long, lean, third bow, speaking for the first time.

"I can't see without my glasses," complained the bow, fumbling among the blades of the oars. "Where is the bloomin' thing? Ah, here we are!"

"Shove off forward!" bel-
lowed the voice of the coxswain for the third time.

The bow leaned his weight behind the boat-hook against the ship's side, and the bows of the galley sheered off slowly.

"We're awa'," said the India-rubber Man — "We're awa.' Lord, 'ow lovely!"

They paddled desultorily for a few strokes. Then the bow "bucketted" and sent a shower of icy spray over the backs of the two after oarsmen. Their loud expostulations were followed by protests from Tweedledum.

"My oar's got a kink!" he announced lugubriously.

"Oars!" roared the coxswain. "Now," he said grimly, with the air of a man who had reached the limit of human

¹ Arguing.

patience, "I'll give you all a minute. Ease up your belts, tie your feet down, have a wash and brush up, say your prayers, spit on your hands, and get comfortable once and for all. It's the last stand-easy you'll get. We're going to pull round the head of the line if it breaks blood-vessels."

The minute passed in invective directed chiefly against the oars, the stretchers, the crutches, the boat generally, and the helmsman in particular. At the expiration of that time, however, they all sat up facing aft, with their hands expectantly gripping the looms of their oars and profound gloom on every countenance.

The coxswain contemplated them dispassionately.

"You're a cheerful-looking lot to start out with to win the cup back!" was his comment. "Oars ready! 'Way together!"

The crew, like a child that suddenly tires of being naughty, bent to their oars, and the boat slid through the water under long swinging strokes. . . .

Regatta day broke calm and clear. The hands were piped to breakfast, and the Quartermaster of the Morning Watch, as the latest authority on the vagaries of the barometer, entered the Petty Officers' mess with the air of one in the intimate confidence of the high gods.

"Glass 'igh an' steady," he announced, helping himself to sausage and mashed potatoes. "We'll 'ave it calm till mebbe five o'clock, then it'll blow from

the south'ard. That's down the course. But we won't 'ave no rain to-day."

The Captain of the Forecastle, who reads his Old Moore's Almanac, and was susceptible to signs and portents, confirmed the optimism of the Quartermaster.

"I 'ad a dream last night," he said. "I was a-walkin' with my missus alongside the Serpentine—in London, that is. There was swans sailin' on it, an' we was 'eaving bits of bread to 'em. 'Fred,' she says, 'you'll 'ave it beautiful for your regatta. You'll win,' she said, 'the Stokers' Cutters, the Veterans' Skiffs, the Or-ficers' Gigs, an' the All-comers.'"

"That's along of you eatin' tin' lobster for supper last night," said the Ship's Painter, a sceptic who had a sovereign on a race not mentioned by the Captain of the Forecastle's wife. "'Ow about the perishin' Boys' Cutters? Didn't your ole Dutch say nothin' about them?"

The seer shook his head and performed intricate evolutions with a pin in the cavernous recesses of his mouth. "Mebbe she would 'ave if she'd 'ad the chanst," was the reply. "But she didn't 'ave time to say no more afore the 'Reveille!' interrupted 'er, an' I 'ad to turn out."

The Quartermaster of the Morning Watch concluded his repast. "Well," he said, "maybe she'll tell you the rest to-night. Then we'll know 'oo's 'oo, as the sayin' is. But there's one crew as

I'll put my shirt on, an' that's the Officers' Gigs."

"'Ow about the Boys' Cutters?" demanded the Ship's Painter, whose sovereign was in jeopardy.

"An' the Vet'rans' Skiffs?" echoed the Captain of the Forecastle. "What my wife mentioned? 'Fred,' she says——"

"An' the All-comers?" interrupted the Captain of the Side. "Wiv the Chief Buffer¹ coxin' the launch?"

The Quartermaster of the Morning Watch made a gesture with an enormous freckled paw, as if stroking an invisible kitten. "I ain't sayin' nothin' against 'em. Nothin' at all. What I says is, 'Wait an' see.' I ain't a bettin' man, not meself. But if any one was to fancy an even 'arf quid——"

The shrill whistle of a call-boy's pipe clove the babel of the crowded mess-deck. "A-away Racing Whaler's Crew!" shouted the cracked high tenor. "Man your boat!"

"There you are!" said the Blacksmith, a silent bearded man. "What are we all 'angin' on to the slack for? Come on deck. That's the first race."

Regatta day, even in War-time, was a day of high Carnival. The dozen or so of Battleships in the Squadron concerned, each with its crew of over a thousand men, looked forward to the event much in the spirit of a Derby crowd that gathers overnight on Epsom Downs. The other Squadrons of the

vast Battle-fleet were disposed to ignore the affair; they had their own regattas to think about, either in retrospection or as an event to come. But in the Squadron immediately concerned it was, next to the annihilation of the German Fleet, the chief consideration of their lives, and had been for some weeks past.

For weeks, and in some cases months, the racing crews of launches, cutters, gigs, and whalers, Officers and men alike, had carried through an arduous training interrupted only by attentions to the King's enemies and the inclemencies of the Northern spring. And now that the day had come, both spectators and crews moved in an atmosphere of holiday and genial excitement heated by inter-ship rivalry to fever-point.

A Regatta is one of the safety-valves through which the ship's companies of the silent Fleet in the North can rid themselves of a little superfluous steam. Only those who have shared the repressed monotony of their unceasing vigil can appreciate what such a day means. To be spared for a few brief hours the irksome round of routine, to smoke "Woodbines" the livelong day; to share, in the grateful sunlight, some vantage-point with a "Raggie," and join in the full-throated rapturous roars of excitement that sweep down the mile-long lane of ships abreast the sweating crews. This is to taste some-

¹ Chief Boatswain's Mate.

thing of the fierce exhilaration of the Day that the Fleet is waiting for, and has awaited through a thousand vigils.

A Dockyard tug, capable of accommodating several hundred men, lay alongside. The ship had swung on the tide at an angle to the course that obscured full view of the start. Those of the ship's company who desired a complete spectacle from start to finish were to go away and anchor at some convenient point in the line from which an uninterrupted panorama could be obtained. The device had other advantages: by anchoring midway down the course, a flagging crew could be spurred on to mightier efforts by shouts and execrations, the beating of gongs, hooting syren and fog-horns, whistles and impassioned entreaties.

Accordingly, the more ardent supporters of the various crews, armed with all the implements of noise and encouragement that their ingenuity could devise, embarked. They swarmed like bees over the deck and bridge-house, they clung to the rigging and funnel stays, and perched like monkeys on the mast and derrick. Thus freighted the craft moved off amid deafening cheers, and took up a position midway between two battleships moored in the centre of the line. The anchor was dropped, and the closely-packed spectators, producing mouth-organs and cigarettes, prepared to while away the time until the commencement of the first race.

They belonged to a West-country ship—that is to say, one manned from the Dockyard Port of Plymouth. The master of the tug, whose interest in such matters was to say the least of it cosmopolitan, had anchored between two Ports-mouth-manned Battleships. The position he had selected commanded a full view of the course, and there his responsibilities in the affair ended. On the other hand, the crews of the two battleships in question, assembled in full strength on their respective forecastles in anticipation of the forthcoming race, regarded the arrival of the tug in the light of a diversion sent straight from heaven.

The tug's cable had scarcely ceased to rattle through the hawse-pipe when the opening shots, delivered through a megaphone, rang out across the water.

"*Ulllo! web-feet!*" bellowed a raucous voice. "*Yeer! where be tu?*" A roar of laughter followed this sally.

The occupants of the tug were taken by surprise. Their interests had hitherto been concentrated in the string of whalers being towed down to the distant starting-point by a picket-boat. Before they could rally their forces a cross-fire of rude chaff, winged by uproarious laughter, had opened on either side. Catch-word and jest, counter and repartee, utterly unintelligible to any one outside Lower-deck circles, were hurled to and fro like snowballs. Every discreditable incident of their joint careers as

units of that vast fighting force was recalled and paraded; personalities that would have brought blushes to the cheeks of a Smithfield porter, couched in the obscure jargon of Catterwater and Landport taverns, assailed the very courts of heaven; every point scored was greeted with shouts of delight, and an immense good-humour fastened on one and all.

The distant report of a gun sounded, and a far-off roar of voices announced that the first race had started; straightway the tumult subsided on board the tug and her neighbours, and an expectant hush awaited the approach of the line of boats, moving towards them like a row of furious water-beetles.

The race drew nearer, and ship after ship of the line took up the deep-toned roar. The names of the ships, invoked by their respective ship's companies as might the ancients have called upon their Gods, blended in one great volume of sound. The more passionately interested supporters of the crews followed the strung-out competitors in steamboats, and added their invocations to the rest.

A rifle cracked on board the end ship of the line, and the crew of the leading boat collapsed in crumpled heaps above their oars. The race was over. On board a ship half-way down the line a frantic outburst of cheering suddenly predominated above all other sounds, and continued unabated as the rifle cracked twice more in quick succession, announcing that the

second and third boats had ended the race.

A hoist of flags at the masthead of the Flagship proclaimed the ships' names of the first three crews, dipped, and was succeeded by the number of the next race. Again the gun in the bows of the *Umpires'* steamboat sped the next race upon its way, and once more the tumult of men's voices rose and swelled to a gale of sound that swept along the line and died to the tumultuous cheering of a single ship.

A couple of hours passed thus, and there remained one race before dinner—the Officers' Gigs. The events of the forenoon had considerably enhanced the reputation of the Captain of the Forecastle as a prophet. Furthermore, the result of the Boys' Race had enriched the Ship's Painter to the extent of a sovereign. It needed but the victory of the Officers' Gigs to place the ship well in sight of the Silver Cook, which was the Squadron Trophy for the largest number of points obtained by any individual ship.

The starting-point was the rallying-place for every available steam- and motor-boat in the Squadron, crowded with enthusiastic supporters of the different crews. The dockyard tug, with its freight of hoarse yet still vociferous sailormen, had weighed her anchor and moved down to the end of the line preparatory to steaming in the wake of the last race.

The Umpire, in the stern of an official picket-boat, was apparently the only dispassionate participator in the animated scene. The long, graceful-looking boats, each with its crew of six, their anxious-faced coxswains crouched in the sterns, and tin flags bearing the numbers of their ships in the bows, were being shepherded into position. A tense silence was closing down on the spectators. It deepened as the line straightened out and the motionless boats awaited the signal with their oars poised in readiness for the first stroke.

"Up a little, Number Seven!" shouted the starter wearily through his megaphone. Two hours of this sort of thing robs even the Officers' Gigs of much outstanding interest to the starter.

"Goo-o-o!" whispered one of the watching men. "'E don't 'arf know 'is job, the coxswain of that boat." The boat in question, with a single slow stroke, moved up obediently.

"Stand by!" sang the metallic voice again. Then—

BANG! They were off.

As if released by the concussion, a wild pandemonium burst from the waiting spectators' throats. The light boats sprang forward like things alive, and in their churning wakes came the crowded steamboats.

For perhaps two minutes the racing boats travelled as if drawn by invisible threads of equal length. Then first

one and then another dropped a little. The bow of one of the outside boats broke an oar, and before the oarsman could get the spare one into the crutch the boat slipped to the tail of the race. The spare oar shipped, however, she maintained her position, and her crew continued pulling against hopeless odds with pretty gallantry.

Half-way down the mile course there were only four boats in it. The Flagship's boat led by perhaps a yard, with a rival on either side of her pulling stroke for stroke. Away to the right, and well clear, the Young Doctor urged his crew on with sidelong glances out of the corner of his eye at the other boats.

"You've got 'em!" he said. "You've got 'em cold. Steady does it! Quicken a fraction, Number One. Stick it, Bow—stick it, lad!"

The Flagship's boat had increased her lead to half a length ahead of her two consorts: the Young Doctor's crew held her neck and neck. Then the Young Doctor cleared his dry throat, and spoke with the tongues of men and fallen angels. He coaxed and encouraged, he adjured and abused them stroke by stroke towards their goal. The crew, with set white faces, and staring eyes fixed on each other's backs, responded like heroes, but Double-O Gerrard was obviously tiring, and the First Lieutenant's breath was coming in sobs. They were pulling themselves out.

The roar of voices on either

side of the course surged in their ears like the sound of a waterfall. Astern of them was the picket-boat, a graceful feather of spray falling away on either side of the stem-piece. A concourse of wardroom and gunroom officers had crowded into her bows, and the Commander, purple with emotion, bellowed incoherencies through a megaphone.

Then, with one keen glance at the Flagship's crew, and one at the rapidly approaching finishing line, the Young Doctor chose the psychological moment. "Stand by!" he croaked. "Now, all together—SPURT!"

His crew responded with the last ounce of energy in their exhausted frames. They were blind, deaf and dumb, straining, gasping, forcing "heart and nerve and sinew" to drive the leaden boat through those last few yards. Suddenly, far above their heads, rang out the crack of a rifle, and, the next instant, another. The crew collapsed as if shot.

For a moment none were capable of speech. Then the First Lieutenant raised his head from his hands.

"Which is it?" he asked. "Us or them?"

The Young Doctor was staring up at the masthead of the Flagship. A tangle of flags appeared above the bridge-screen.

"I can't read 'em," he said. "Which is it? Translate, some one, for pity's sake."

The crew of the Flagship's boat, lying abreast of them

a few yards away, answered the question. They turned towards their late adversaries and began clapping. The next moment the dockyard tug burst into a triumphant frenzy, and the picket-boat, full of cheering, clapping mess-mates, slid alongside to take the painter.

The First Lieutenant stretched out a large, blistered hand. "Shake, Pills," he said.

One race is, after all, very much like another. Yet the afternoon wore on without any appreciable abatement in the popular enthusiasm. And it was not without its memorable features. The Bandsmen's Race crowned one of the participators in undying fame. This popular hero broke an oar half-way through the race, and rising to his feet, promptly sprang overboard.

His spectacular action plunged the remainder of the crew in hopeless confusion, and he himself was rescued with difficulty in a half-drowned state of collapse by the Umpire's boat. Yet for some occult reason no feat of gallantry in action would have won him such universal commendation on the Lower Deck. "Nobby Clark—'im as jumped overboard in the Bandsmen's Race"—was thereafter his designation among his fellows.

The last race—the All-comers—did not justify universal expectation. The "treble-banked" launch was indeed coxed by the Chief Boatswain's Mate. A "Funny-party" in

the stern, composed of a clown, a nigger, and a stout seaman in female attire, added their exhortations to the "Chief Buffer's" impassioned utterances. But the Flagship's galley, pulling eight oars, with the coxswain perched hazardously out over the stern, won the three-mile tussle, and won it well.

As the Quartermaster of the Morning Watch had foretold, a breeze sprang up towards the close of the day. It blew from the southward, and carried down the lines a medley of hilarious sounds. A drifter hove in sight, shaping course for the Fleet Flagship. She was crowded to suffocation with singing, cheering sailormen, and secured to her stumpy bowsprit was a Silver Cock. As she approached the stern of the Flagship, however, the uproar subsided, and the densely thronged drifter was white with upturned, expectant faces.

A solitary figure was walk-

ing up and down the quarter-deck of the battleship. He paused a moment, then suddenly stepped right aft to the rail, and smiling gravely, clapped his hands, applauding the trophy in the bows of the drifter. The last rays of the setting sun caught the broad gold bands that ringed his sleeve almost from cuff to elbow.

A wild tumult of frantic cheering burst out almost like an explosion from every throat still capable of emitting sound. There was gratitude and passionate loyalty in the demonstration, and it continued long after the figure on the quarter-deck had turned away and the drifter had resumed her noisy, triumphant tour of the Fleet.

"That's what I likes about 'IM," whispered a bearded seaman hoarsely, as they swung off on their new course. "'E's that 'Uman!" He jerked his head astern in the direction of the mighty battleship.

THE END OF A LONG PAUSE.

BY H. R. W.

TAHINOS is no ordinary lake. Its eccentricities are many. For some reason I have never fathomed, all the maps show it twice its real length. Instead of being one long connected sheet of water as far as Seres, it ends at that unique village, Ahinos, and it cannot have extended farther within at all recent times. Even the remnant which remains is divided into an upper and lower lake, connected merely by the river. So it is shaped like a dumb-bell. Its colour, except at sunset, is muddy and forbidding. The fishermen, save at certain recognised landing-places, have to wade far out to reach their ungainly flat-bottomed boats. It seems to have given up the struggle for existence and to be gently and contentedly dying. Yet, round its shores swim, float, dive, and fly a marvellous company. Long swan squadrons are for ever paddling along its shore. It swarms with many kinds of geese and duck. Its marshes are alive with snipe, herons, pelicans, and divers, and a host of strange exotic birds I could not identify, who love its lonely peace. Blue-jays, orioles, all the eagles and hawks hover over its bordering forests. It so teems with fish, mostly pike, carp, and a strange specimen we called "suckers," that the fishermen who strive to drain it never fail to fill their nets (they always fail to throw back even the most micro-

scopic pike). There are wild boar in its swamps and roaming at night through the fields around it; often I have seen jackals shrink into the shrub when on my way down to stalk with a service rifle, quite unsuccessfully, the wily goose! Its sandy beach, that grows incredibly hot at midday, harbours all the least desirable members of the insect kingdom. One field I often passed was covered with the enamelled and discarded skins of snakes. I do not believe a greater naturalists' paradise exists in Europe. I only approached the fringe of its mysteries, yet I never failed, when I went down to it, to see some enthralling piece of wild life, so unstudied, so revealing, so humbling, that it almost brought tears to my eyes. Such is Tahinos, that dying mere. May it ever remain unhurt by man, and the home of all quiet beasts! I could almost bless its mosquitoes if they would ensure that.

Settled in this quiet seclusion, hardly ever seeing a strange face, carrying out our diverse duties during the day, plotting the destruction of the geese in the evening, and hearing little news of the outside world, we had almost forgotten that behind those clear-cut hills before us was waiting our enemy, against whom we should have eventually to go up, or who would eventually

sally forth to seek us. And then one fine day War revisited us. A secret message came through to us saying that the Bulgars had crossed the frontier in several places, and in considerable strength, north of Kavalla. The same day a heavy bombardment started up north, and continued for several hours. We rang up the Cyclist Company of the next Division and inquired what was up. They answered that they believed we were shelling Rupel. It sounded like the beginning of great things. So it was, but not in the sense we imagined, for an urgent wire came through late that night saying that the Bulgars had broken out from the Gorge and from the Demir-Hissar region, and had advanced almost to Orljak, that most important bridge. This news completed the waking-up process. It meant that strong forces were coming down at us from both ends of the lake. The roads taken by the Eastern columns led straight to Neohori, *vid* Drama and Kavalla. We all were mildly excited, and we all wondered what the Greeks would do. They still had at least a Division round Kavalla, and another guarding Seres and Drama. No one who has not talked to the Macedonian Greek can realise what Kavalla means to him. It has all the sweetness of stolen goods. It was said to have at least two million pounds' worth of tobacco stored within it. It is the apple of the Finance Minister's eye.

Surely its occupation, to say

nothing of Seres and Drama, would at last rouse the rather sluggish wrath of the descendants of Miltiades. There were strong rumours that they were ready to defend the forts to the last. (*Requiescant in Goerlitz.*) The next day brought little news, tidings from the North seemed doubtfully reassuring. The Bulgars were not pushing with any vigour. The Eastern columns were well on their way. There was obviously nothing to stop them till they reached the Lake and Neohori. Meanwhile we were very busy strengthening our posts and arranging certain little secret matters. The men had musketry practice at our range by the Lake. It all seemed rather unreal still. But the two certain signs of coming storm were there to be read. Refugees were beginning to appear at Neohori, and certain additions were apparent in the feathered world, bearing Iron Crosses on their wings. They passed us high, and did not think us worth a bomb, though we "froze" for them religiously when the whistle went. Then one morning I was woken early by the agitated sounds that betray a hasty start. "O—— and R—— off on a secret mission," said the C.O.

They set forth, after being reassured by every one that it probably merely meant getting melons for the General. They did not return that day, and early next morning a large puff of black smoke rose from the direction of Angista, and the Sergeant-Major said he had heard rifle fire for some

minutes. We stared out over that eerie plain and wondered what was up. Late that afternoon a message came through that O—— had been wounded and all the rest were safe. Shortly afterwards the weariest body of men in the world staggered into camp, headed by R——, marvellously done up and grimy. War is never a pleasant proposition, save possibly to arm-chair strategists and painters, word and otherwise, of battle pictures. It is vile at all times, but it is doubly vile to those who have known it once (and R—— and O—— had both been through the second battle of "Wipers"), partially forgotten, and then suddenly been brought face to face with it once more. Its assumption is bad, its resumption ten times worse. R—— and O—— owned a slight tremor went through them, and that they felt like that noble lord in Henry IV. who said, "It was a great pity, so it was, that villainous saltpetre should be digged out of the bowels of the harmless earth, which many a good tall fellow had destroyed." Their cares were not lightened by hearing that the R.E.'s wanted thirty of their cycles, and that their strength was thus to be halved.

Angista is about twenty-five miles from the Bridge. The road, it goes without saying, is bad and very hilly. The temperature was about 95° in the shade. The road at first was strewn with refugees, rich and poor, journeying in every type of vehicle, from comparatively

modern four-wheelers to the most antique and barbarous cart. R—— went ahead with a small advance party to find the way—no small task when the map is merely a gay deceiver. It has an accursed trick of pointing out a fair obvious highway unembarrassed by bypaths or crossings. Reality always shows a series of decayed tracks deep in sand, from which one may take one's doubting choice. To lose one's way twice is creditable—once, stamps one a born explorer; to go straight without a fault to one's goal would require at least a pillar of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night. R—— was ever a genius at finding his way, possessing that cool, quick-deciding, almost inspired sense of direction which should be of great service to himself and his country in his new sphere, the R.F.C. He led the column with only one serious mistake to the neighbourhood of the station, and went on himself to reconnoitre it. He found it packed with an almost hysterical mob of refugees, some of whom rushed towards him crying that the Bulgars were only two kilometres away, that they had already been to the station, but had gone back again. R—— elbowed them aside, went to the telephone office and cleared out the staff, who were thankful to go. By now the rest of the party had come up. Owing to the limbers being late, work could not be begun at once. The bridges were "guarded" by a few

perplexed and disconsolate Greeks, who received a firm request to retire with obvious relief. They went off without the slightest idea where any of their comrades were, and probably buried their uniforms and went back to civil life, regretting, no doubt, that being a member of King Constantine's Army was so like being in the back row of a musical comedy chorus. For the justification of the nobler portions of the Greek Army, that much-tried but potentially gallant force, let it be said here, that no Army in the world—not Napoleon's Old Guard, let its discipline and courage be what it may—could have maintained its *morale* untarnished after the corrupt, chaotic, and callous ordeal through which it had had to pass. Many times I have sympathised with the Greek Army of Macedonia, especially its officers, loyally standing by their miserable monarch, and refusing to follow the primrose path of dalliance with their allegiance, yet who knew they were filling a shameful, farcical, and useless rôle, when often enough their real sentiments would have sent them flying at the throats of their hereditary foes. I have seen a Greek officer with tears in his eyes deplore his nationality, and a man's heart must be almost broken before he can do that. But I must return to that small and lonely party at Angista. When the limbers came work was started, and went on all night. The little body of cyclists kept a chilly

and anxious vigil throughout a pitch-dark night, expecting every moment to have to show a resource and nerve, which lack of food, extreme fatigue, and the influence of the hour made a hard enough prospect. A small party of Yeomanry luckily came up and slightly strengthened them. The night passed without anything worse than a plague of mosquitoes from the Angista river, and about 6 A.M. the first bridge went up perfectly, broke in half, and fell into the stream. The other was reported nearly ready. Some sort of breakfast was then got, and preparations made for getting away from that very "unhealthy" neighbourhood. The men were just getting down to it when a look-out reported a small body of troops advancing down to the river from the North, and some more out on the left flank. A message was at once sent ordering the officer at the other bridge to send it up at once.

The Cyclists took up a position in a low ridge covering the village, and the Yeomanry went forward. Just as they rode up to the village, a body of troops in fours were seen debouching from it. The Yeomanry officer, thinking they were Greeks (they were in Greek uniform), galloped up to them, shouting, "Who the devil are you?" He was about twenty yards away from them, and they stood stock-still, staring at him. It must have been one of the funniest situations the War has seen. Suddenly he realised who they were, and the small

troop turned like one man and galloped back, shouting "Bulgars!" Now the amazed foe (commanded, by the way, by a Boche officer) were an excellent target for the Cyclists, but unluckily the Yeomanry came clean across their front and masked their fire, so the Bulgars had time to open out and open fire. The situation was not pleasant. The bikes were some way back, and the flankers looked like cutting them off.

The order to retire was given, a few men remaining to cover it. A fairly warm fire was exchanged for a few minutes. O—— was hit in the hand, and an R.E. or two likewise. Several Bulgars were knocked out, as our fire was infinitely superior to theirs. But eventually the bikes were reached, and the other bridge having gone up, and the limbers being away, the expedition retired at considerable speed. The Bulgars did not pursue. They were under fire from the Yeomanry, and probably very wild at the destruction of the bridges, as it was culpably negligent on their part to allow such supreme audacity to succeed. I have told this little story at some length to show the confusion, difficulties, and humour of those early days. What with beleaguered Greek corps; a population, some of whom looked on the Bulgars as angels of light and deliverance, and others who regarded them as worse than the Prince of Darkness; a foe who wore any uniform he happened to choose, from a Greek to a

Scottish, and often none at all, fighting an enemy in a neutral country with a neutral army looking on—was, till things settled down, Gilbertian. I am glad to say that this little feat was mentioned in General Milne's despatch, and R——'s name figured there also.

A few days later we were ordered at very short notice to send two platoons down to the bridge, to form part of a mixed force (some hundreds of mounted infantry, a battalion and a section of R.F.A.) This force was to start in the early hours of the morning. It was intended to carry out a reconnaissance in force, to clear up the local situation, and to demolish a few bridges. It was no light task for our two platoons. They would get no sleep for perhaps forty-eight hours, and would have to ride a good seventy or eighty miles, combined with an indefinite amount of dismounted action. They left Camp about midnight. The next day I had to visit A——, to see how our post were faring, to fix up some secret matters, and to see if there were any sick bad enough to be evacuated. As I left I looked over towards Angista and saw an explosion, and then shortly after another. I climbed a rise to see better. Two spouts of black smoke had risen sullenly, and were still hovering over the plain. They came from the forest country down by the railway. There was a big rain-storm coming up, the outskirts of which just caught me. Then I heard unmistakable gun fire,

and saw, shining pure white against the blackness of the sky, burst after burst of shrapnel. I thought I could just hear rifle fire. I cursed the rain viciously, for it is apt to turn the sand on those apologies for roads into a curious sticky compound, which is not only horrible filth to face on a bike, but which actually clogs up in the mud-guards and round the brakes till further motion is impossible. Knowing what sort of job was on, I felt anxious.

I did my business at Ahinos, evacuated a very malarial corporal, and got back to camp about three. No more firing had been heard, and we had just decided that the Bulgars had "thought better of it," when the sound of fairly heavy rifle fire came drifting down the wind. We got field-glasses and the big telescope and stared out over that mysterious and apparently lifeless plain. We picked out several shepherds with their flocks seemingly quite unconcerned, and then several limbers came galloping at full speed down the hill from Zdravik. They were raising a little dust, so evidently the rain had not been very heavy. We were in a curiously advantageous position for watching the scrap, because the lake runs up from Neohori towards the Bulgar positions, so that to get back from Angista to the bridge our troops had, as it were, to cross our front. It was like watching an action on a film. Next we picked out a cavalry patrol, probably Bulgar from its position, on a mound down by the

woods. The rifle fire was alternately dying down to a few isolated shots and then rolling out heavily. It was obviously coming rapidly nearer. At last we picked out our infantry retiring in open order, quite leisurely, and then lying down and opening fire. The two forces were obviously in contact, but not very close contact. We wondered anxiously where our two platoons were. We could see troops in extended order apparently following up our skirmishing line, and we had just come to the conclusion that they must be Bulgars, when shrapnel began bursting quickly over them. Our strategist then delivered himself of a weighty review of the situation, which turned out to be marvellously correct. "I believe," he said, "the Bulgars let us get almost to Angista and then attacked us frontally, and also brought down troops from the hill-villages, and are attacking our right flank, trying to cut the road behind us." I believe that is what happened. The road from Angista describes a semicircle, first running down to the lake, rather away from the bridge, and then turns and follows the lake back to it. The rifle fire kept fairly heavy and ever nearer for half an hour, and our guns were shelling them at intervals; obviously, when the pursuing Bulgars reached the top of a ridge and poured down, they presented a target. In the hollows they were hidden. At last we saw a body of cyclists coming down the hill to Doksambos. "So that's all right," we said,

though they still had a long way to go. The firing gradually died down, though we continued shelling a ridge by Zdravik. Our heroes rolled up about eleven that night, weary to death, but having had an excellent little experience. They had been working with the Yeomanry and M.T. all the time, and had come under fire in the morning by the railway. All the afternoon they had fought a classic rearguard action, fortunately at ranges at which the Bulgars don't shine. The Bulgars had thrown several thousand men down from the hills, and had attacked quite briskly, but the infantry and guns had always stopped them becoming a serious menace to our retreat, and had inflicted some loss. The guns had been handled very well and had knocked the Bulgars about. Occasionally one caught a glimpse of Bulgar sentries, obviously on good terms with the inhabitants. We could also see one or two Bulgar cavalry patrols. As I have said before, owing to the swing in the lake we were much nearer the Bulgars than our main body was at Neohori, and it was a curious feeling to be, as it were, almost behind your enemies and to have your enemies between you and your friends. One could realise the overwhelming importance of Neohori. It is a natural frontier barrier, as indeed is the Struma valley as a whole.

Advancing into that bottle neck, and storming that plateau, would be a terrific mili-

tary task, and I always hoped the enemy would try it. I never saw a position which impressed me with so "Thus far and no farther"—so grim a look. The passive, menacing, inevitable appearance of a natural fortress.

A day or two later we got notice that a refugee column was coming through to Nigrita (a place that still remembers Bulgars). When it came it stretched for miles—a dreary, straggling kaleidoscope—carts, donkeys, cabs, and padders of the hoof. All wore that look of aloof resignation common to those Ishmaelitish Macedonian peasants. We fed them, watered them, and photographed them, and sent them on their weary way. We were ordered at the same time to evacuate all villages within a certain distance of the lake. This operation was to be completed in three hours, and the dispossessed were to take to the mountains. I had to deal with A—. I took a small escort, and rode over one boiling morning. A— is worthy to be painted by a great artist and described by a great poet. It lies at the lake end, where turgid old Tahinos dies away in a vast desolate swamp. Its main street borders this swamp like a pitiful esplanade. The locals in their hours of ease can sit at the tiny café, watch their swine wallowing up to their necks in the ooze, the wild geese splashing and sunning themselves in the reeds, drink masticha, and often enough catch malaria and die. It somehow reminded me of "Eden" in 'Martin

with our post to look after her. I also saw a woman who had just given birth, and made similar arrangements. When I got back to the Esplanade I found a French cavalry patrol and some of our Yeomanry had arrived. The French carried no rations, but very quickly discovered some bread and wine and lunched heartily. They have a marvellous gift for travelling light and rationing themselves.

The Yeomanry had been in action all the day before. The French sous-officier was examining the opposite shore of the lake, which was miraging badly in the heat. He spotted a Bulgarian patrol watering horses at Petelinos. Though separated by a short two miles, we were in no way concerned with one another, and we could undertake no mutual frightfulness. A lake is a very effective peace keeper. Then they all rode off. On looking at my watch I found I had been there $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Almost every one had gone, and it was very quiet. A grizzled individual, tanned almost black, dressed in what looked like the garb of an Albanian gypsy, with a wary and untamed look in his eye, came jogging along driving a herd of the half-wild pigs peculiar to those parts. He hustled them along, talking to them all the time. The last few heavily-laden donkeys were vanishing up the hill, and suddenly we were alone. The village animals could not make it out at all. A flock of geese was peering about and chattering in their perplexity. After a little while they got up and

flew out to join their wild brethren on the lake. A donkey came cautiously along and began picking up scraps from under the café tables. A bantam-cock jumped up on a table and began pecking furiously at a bunch of grapes. All the birds on the marsh—geese, coots, herons—seemed to be edging in closer. It may sound absurd, but I received an almost psychic impression of subtle accomplished change, as if the wild things were reclaiming their own. I felt uneasy and resolved to be off. Just as we were getting ready, a very old gentleman appeared out of a farm driving his donkey before him. He waved to me cheerily, and said, "Finish Johnny," and that seemed to sum it up. That is war in the Balkans, an accepted endemic evil to be cheerfully endured and made the best of. Some of these people I had just driven out had come all the way from the shores of the Black Sea in a series of enforced migrations, each time seeing their little store dissipated, their hard toil wasted, their little preparations ruined, their little enterprises failures. "They shall flee and take to the mountains." Yet some people wonder why Macedonia is not a flourishing land. I hope with all my heart that one day these poor folk will come back to repeople A—, that there will be again a cheerful hum around their threshing-floors, and that they will grow old in prosperity and learn to laugh over their last "Three hours' notice."

The Struma is a cynic

stream. He has seen many armies gather round his banks. He has watched their rivalries and hearkened to their bickerings, sure in the knowledge that he held the secret of their fates within "his concave shores." If a stranger were to journey along the valley on an August day, for choice at evening, when the sun has banked his fires, and as he sinks to rest flatters his vanity and reveals his good nature by beautifying a land he has been content all day to scorch; when he gilds the muddy old lake, casts long shadows over the tired old hills, and refines a scene grimly torrid at noon with a cool, quiet evening charm, the last thing that traveller would associate with such a prospect would be rampant rioting disease. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that the Struma valley in the autumn is a death-trap. For if such a traveller were a medical man, and he stooped to examine any of the few almost dried-up little streams or the swamps by the lake, he would see some little creatures floating and sporting about (if creatures with such a malign destiny ever deign to sport) beside their banks or in little stagnant pools which would make him open his eyes, enlighten him considerably, and send him to search hastily in his wallet for quinine. For he would have seen he was in the home of the *Anopheles* mosquito. In Macedonia, except in the winter, there are always dysentery, paratyphoid, and strange baffling diseases,

which receive such cryptic titles as "P.U.O." and "N.Y.D."; but the Struma is the home of malaria. The native does not seem to escape that, as he seems to escape those other plagues, to which the stranger falls so easy a victim, and the population of the valley steadily dwindles. Quinine parade was a daily rigorous rite. When we got to Monihi, in the middle of July, the inhabitants of that village in a guarded way hinted that it was not the healthiest place in the world. In Salonika the Greeks had a saying, "June hot, July very hot, August finish Johnny" (all British troops from the G.O.C. downwards are "Johnny" to them). I knew just enough medicine to see that an enlarged spleen was a common possession of our neighbours. Down by the lake the mosquitoes were intolerable; in our camp they were plentiful, but, compared with the flies, almost unobtrusive. We all eventually got nets, and our standing posts slept in mosquito-proof huts, but to escape continual biting was impossible. My arms were always covered with sores. After we had been up about a fortnight we began to get cases — not many, but the number showed an unmistakable tendency to increase. Men went away and came back more or less cured, but our strength slowly dwindled. The officers continued resisting well. The men on the posts and on patrol were attacked the most. I had begun to believe I was going to get through unscathed till the

day after I had evacuated A——, when I felt that slight admonitory malaise which means fever. The next day I felt worse, and got a rigor about five. I was Orderly Officer, and had to turn out and inspect the guard at night. When they fell in, I noticed one man had sloped arms on the wrong shoulder. He seemed half asleep, his garments were in disarray, and altogether he looked anything but martial. I was just going to curse him when he swayed towards me, and at the same moment I also seemed to lose control of my legs. So we wobbled about in front of one another, and then he fell flat on his face.

"Been bad all day, sir," said the corporal.

I took his temperature, and found it was 105. I staggered to my bivouac, shaking all over, and my teeth rattling. I was 103, and "Spleen palpable." The Struma had beaten me after all. For five days I lay with a temperature varying from 103 to 105, my head drumming and throbbing with 40 grains of quinine and 20 of aspirin. I lived on condensed milk and chlorinated water. The only day of which I have any distinct recollection is the one before I was moved. I was woken by the dread din of unmistakable shelling, and not far away. I could hear the discharge of the gun, and the bursts. My servant came and said, "Them Belgars [he could never get the name of that enterprising race quite right—sometimes they were

"Bulgians"] are shelling the boats." I staggered to the door, from where I could see the Bulgar guns quite clearly. They were firing straight across the lake. "Our turn next," I thought; "I don't feel like running far." They fired 50 rounds and then stopped. A Boche plane was hovering round, and it was just a toss up whether they thought us worthy of a little strafe. Mercifully they didn't. Later on the Monitor shelled them, and then there was a humming in the air. We couldn't see any birds, but suddenly there came a succession of dull "booms" from across the lake, and then we had the inexpressible joy of seeing a Bulgar camp we had spotted, severely bombed by British planes. I have been bombed myself, and expected to be bombed many times, and it was a cheering sight. The bombs were dropping right amongst their bivouacs, and they started a big fire. All the time we could hear that grimmest (by association) of all sounds, the humming of invisible machines. I imagine such an experience must be rather unique. The lake made these freaks possible. But the sounds and stir of war agree but little with a throbbing head, a palpable spleen, and high temperature. I was sufficiently dazed to get but a muddle-headed impression of what was going on. I could never be quite sure whether any impression was subjective or objective. (I have sometimes wondered whether Bishop Berkeley's idealism would have stood the test of a severe shell-

ing.) I was thankful enough when a M.O. rode over next morning, and marked me for Stavros. I left that night in an old mule ambulance. I reached the advanced station of the — Field Ambulance that night, and crossed by the lighter next day to Stavros, where I boarded the old *F*—, bound for Malta.

The lighter was crowded with bad dysentery cases, so I went up on deck. I sat down, and presently, after all the cot cases had come on board, a stretcher was carried on with a little faded Union Jack resting on something very still and quiet. ("That's the bloke what went West last night," said a man near me.) The stretcher was laid down by me and covered with a tarpaulin. Some walking cases came on a little later, and seeing every inch of the deck crowded except a tempting piece of tarpaulin, they made straight for it. Before I could stop them they had plumped down a heap of equipment, and were just going to seat themselves, when I said, "That's a corpse under there." "Bloke went West last night," said the same man as before. The late-comers stared at it for a second; one remarked, "We ain't waked 'im," and then they wearily resumed their equipment, and stolidly moved off to find another dumping-ground. It was one of those little incidents that remain fixed for ever in one's mind.

A few days later we sailed, and as Stavros faded away

behind our golden wake, and Athos, that fairy mountain, shone up before us, I looked back at that short dark break in the hills where the Struma seeks the sea, and in a shameful glow of sentiment I delivered myself of this little tribute: "Good-bye, Macedonia! I have called you many hard names in my time, I have many times cursed your fiery suns, the storms that sweep you, your shadeless, pitiless roads deep in your most choking dust. Your nightmare insects have many times stung me to despair. I have left no less than a stone and a half of my substance in your keeping. And yet sometimes I have known my curses to ring false. Something from within me came out to meet you, something that despised the body you chastened, something that, if one will allow it, will always come out to meet the untamed, the lonely, and the beautiful. Perhaps it was the many good fights I had with you, perhaps it was that I was so often at your mercy, perhaps it was because that tumult called Civilisation got so few chances to come between us. It may be you purposely keep the path to your temple difficult and hard." However that may be, as I saw the last shadows of the hills dip below the sea, I felt I was leaving, and leaving for ever, something baffling, implacable, and unconquerable, yet something that had changed me, something that had taught me much, something I had almost learnt to love.

"CARRY ON!"

THE CONTINUED CHRONICLE OF K (1).

BY THE JUNIOR SUB.

PART II.

CHAPTER ONE.—"THE NON-COMBATANT."

WE will call the village St Gregoire. That is not its real name; because the one thing you must not do in war-time is to call a thing by its real name. To take a hackneyed example, you do not call a spade a spade: you refer to it, officially, as *Shovels, General Service, One*. This helps to deceive, and ultimately to surprise, the enemy; and as we all know by this time, surprise is the essence of successful warfare. On the same principle, if your troops are forced back from their front-line trenches, you call this "successfully straightening out an awkward salient."

But this by the way. Let us get back to St Gregoire. Hither, mud-splashed, ragged, hollow-cheeked, came our battalion—they call us the Seventh Hairy Jocks nowadays—after four months' continuous employment in the firing line. Ypres was a household word to them; Plugstreet was familiar ground; Givenchy they knew intimately; Loos was their wash-pot—or rather, a collection of wash-pots, for in winter all the shell-craters are full to overflowing. In ad-

dition to their prolonged and strenuous labours in the trenches, the Hairy Jocks had taken part in a Push—a part not altogether unattended with glory, but prolific in casualties. They had not been "pulled out" to rest and refit for over six months, for Divisions on the Western Front were not at that period too numerous, the voluntary system being at its last gasp, while the legions of Lord Derby had not yet crystallised out of the ocean of public talk which held them in solution. So the Seventh Hairy Jocks were bone tired. But they were as hard as a rigorous winter in the open could make them, and—they were going back to rest at last. Had not their beloved C.O. told them so? And he had added, in a voice not altogether free from emotion, that if ever men deserved a solid rest and a good time, "you boys do!"

So the Hairy Jocks trudged along the long, straight, nubblly French road, well content, speculating with comfortable pessimism as to the character of the billets in which they would find themselves.

Meanwhile, ten miles ahead,

the advance party were going round the town in quest of the billets.

Billet-hunting on the Western Front is not quite so desperate an affair as hunting for lodgings at Margate, because in the last extremity you can always compel the inhabitants to take you in—or at least, exert pressure to that end through the *Mairie*. But at the best one's course is strewn with obstacles, and fortunate is the Adjutant who has to his hand a subaltern capable of finding lodgings for a thousand men without making a mess of it.

The billeting officer on this, as on most occasions, was one Cockerell—affectionately known to the entire Battalion as "Sparrow"—and his qualifications for the post were derived from three well-marked and invaluable characteristics, namely, an imperious disposition, a thick skin, and an attractive *bonhomie* of manner.

Behold him this morning dismounting from his horse in the *place* of St Gregoire. Around him are grouped his satellites—the Quartermaster-Sergeant, four Company Sergeants, some odd orderlies, and a forlorn little man in a neat drab uniform with light blue facings—the regimental interpreter. The party have descended, with the delicate care of those who essay to perform acrobatic feats in kilts, from bicycles—serviceable but appallingly heavy machines of Government manufacture, the property of the "Buzzers," or Signallers, but commandeered for the occasion. The Quarter-

master-Sergeant, who is not accustomed to strenuous exercise, mops his brow and glances expectantly round the *place*. His eye comes gently to rest upon a small but hospitable-looking *estaminet*.

Lieutenant Cockerell examines his wrist-watch.

"Half-past ten!" he announces. "Quartermaster-Sergeant!"

"Sirr!" The Quartermaster-Sergeant unglues his longing gaze from the *estaminet* and comes woodenly to attention.

"I am going to see the Town Major about a billeting area. I will meet you and the party here in twenty minutes."

Master Cockerell trots off on his mud-splashed steed, followed by the respectful and appreciative salutes of his followers—appreciative, because a less considerate officer would have taken the whole party direct to the Town Major's office and kept them standing in the street, wasting moments which might have been better employed elsewhere, until it was time to proceed with the morning's work.

"How strong are you?" inquired the Town Major.

Cockerell told him. The Town Major whistled.

"That all? Been doing some job of work, haven't you?"

Cockerell nodded, and the Town Major proceeded to examine a large-scale plan of St Gregoire, divided up into different-coloured plots.

"We are rather full up at present," he said; "but the

Cemetery Area is vacant. The Seventeenth Geordies moved out yesterday. You can have that." He indicated a triangular section with his pencil.

Master Cockerell gave a little deprecatory cough.

"We have come here, sir," he intimated dryly, "for a change of scene."

The stout Town Major—all Town Majors are stout—chuckled.

"Not bad for a Scot!" he conceded. "But it's quite a cheery district, really. You won't have to doss down in the cemetery itself, you know. These two streets here"—he flicked a pencil—"will hold practically all your battalion, at its present strength. There's a capital house in the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau which will do for Battalion Headquarters. The corporal over there will give you your *billets de logement*."

"Are there any other troops in the area, sir?" asked Cockerell, who, as already indicated, was no child in these matters.

"There ought not to be, of course. But you know what the Heavy Gunners and the A.S.C. are! If you come across any of them, fire them out. If they wear too many stars and crowns for you, let me know, and I will perform the feat myself. You fellows need a good rest and no worries, I know. Good morning."

At ten minutes to eleven Cockerell found the Quartermaster-Sergeant and party, wiping their moustaches and

visibly refreshed, at the exact spot where he had left them; and the hunt for billets began.

"A" Company were easily provided for, a derelict tobacco factory being encountered at the head of the first street. Lieutenant Cockerell accordingly detached a sergeant and a corporal from his train, and passed on. The wants of "B" Company were supplied by commandeering a block of four dilapidated houses farther down the street—all in comparatively good repair except the end house, whose roof had been disarranged by a shell during the open fighting in the early days of the war.

This exhausted the possibilities of the first street, and the party debouched into the second, which was long and straggling, and composed entirely of small houses.

"Now for a bit of the retail business!" said Master Cockerell resignedly. "Sergeant M'Nab, what is the strength of 'C' Company?"

"One hunner and thairty-fower other ranks, sirr," announced Sergeant M'Nab, consulting a much-thumbed roll-book.

"We shall have to put them in two's and three's all down the street," said Cockerell. "Come on; the longer we look at it the less we shall like it. Interpreter!"

The forlorn little man, already described, trotted up, and saluted with open hand, French fashion. His name was Baptiste Bombominet ("or words to that effect," as the

Adjutant put it), and may have been so inscribed upon the regimental roll; but throughout the rank and file Baptiste was affectionately known by the generic title of "Alphonso." The previous seven years had been spent by him in the congenial and blameless atmosphere of a Ladies' Tailor's in the west end of London, where he enjoyed the status and emoluments of chief outter. Now, called back to his native land by the voice of patriotic obligation, he found himself selected, by virtue of a residence of seven years in England, to act as official interpreter between a Scottish Regiment which could not speak English, and Flemish peasants who could not speak French. No wonder that his pathetic brown eyes always appeared full of tears. However, he followed Cockerell down the street, and meekly embarked upon a contest with the lady inhabitants thereof, in which he was hopelessly outmatched from the start.

At the first door a dame of massive proportions, but keen business instincts, announced her total inability to accommodate *soldats*, but explained that she would be pleased to entertain *officiers* to any number. This is a common gambit. Twenty British privates in your *gretnier*, though extraordinarily well-behaved as a class, make a good deal of noise, buy little, and leave mud everywhere. On the other hand, two or three officers give no trouble, and

can be relied upon to consume and pay for unlimited omelettes and bowls of coffee.

That seasoned vessel, Lieutenant Cockerell, turned promptly to the sergeant and corporal of "C" Company.

"Sergeant M'Nab," he said, "you and Corporal Downie will billet here." He introduced hostess and guests by an expressive wave of the hand. But shrewd Madame was not to be bluffed.

"Pas de sergents, Monsieur le Capitaine!" she exclaimed. "Officiers!"

"*Ils sont officiers — sous-officiers*," explained Cockerell, rather ingeniously, and moved off down the street.

At the next house the owner—a small, wizened lady of negligible physique but great staying power—entered upon a duet with Alphonso, which soon reduced that very moderate performer to breathlessness. He shrugged his shoulders feebly, and cast an appealing glance towards the Lieutenant.

"What does she say?" inquired Cockerell.

"She say dis 'ouse no goed, sair! She 'ave seven children, and one *malade*—seek."

"Let me see," commanded the practical officer.

He insinuated himself as politely as possible past his reluctant opponent, and walked down the narrow passage into the kitchen. Here he turned, and inquired—

"Er—*où est la pauvre petite chose?*"

Madame promptly opened a door, and displayed a little

girl in bed—a very flushed and feverish little girl.

Cockerell grinned sympathetically at the patient, to that young lady's obvious gratification; and turned to the mother.

"*Je suis très,—triste,*" he said; *j'ai grand miséricorde. Je ne placerais pas de soldats ici. Bon jour!*"

By this time he was in the street again. He saluted politely and departed, followed by the grateful regards of Madame.

No special difficulties were encountered at the next few houses. The ladies at the house-door were all polite; many of them were most friendly; but naturally each was anxious to get as few men and as many officers as possible—except the proprietress of an *estaminet*, who offered to accommodate the entire regiment. However, with a little tact here and a little firmness there, Master Cockerell succeeded in distributing "C" Company among some dozen houses. One old gentleman, with a black alpaca cap and a six-days' beard, proprietor of a lofty establishment at the corner of the street, proved not only recalcitrant, but abusive. With him Cockerell dealt promptly.

"*Ça suffit!*" he announced. "*Montrez-moi votre grenier!*"

The old man, grumbling, led the way up numerous rickety staircases to the inevitable left under the tiles. This proved to be a noble apartment thirty feet long. From wall to wall stretched innumerable strings.

"We can get a whole platoon in here," said Cockerell contentedly. "Tell him, Alphonso. These people," he explained to Sergeant M'Nab, always dislike giving up their lofts, because they hang their laundry there in winter. However, the old boy must lump it. After all, we are in this country for his health, not ours; and he gets paid for every man who sleeps here. That fixes 'C' Company. Now for 'D'! The other side of the street this time."

Quarters were found in due course for "D" Company; after which Cockerell discovered a vacant building-site which would serve for transport lines. An empty garage was marked down for the Quartermaster's ration store, and the Quartermaster-Sergeant promptly faded into its recesses with a grateful sigh. An empty shop in the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, conveniently adjacent to Battalion Headquarters, was appropriated for that gregarious band, the regimental signallers and telephone section; while a suitable home for the Anarchists, or Bombers, together with their stock-in-trade, was found in the basement of a remote dwelling on the outskirts of the area.

After this, Lieutenant Cockerell, left alone with Alphonso and the orderly in charge of his horse, heaved a sigh of exhaustion and transferred his attention from his note-book to his watch.

"That finishes the rank and file," he said. "I breakfasted at four this morning, and the

battalion won't arrive for a couple of hours yet. Alphonso, I am going to have an omelette somewhere. I shall want you in half an hour exactly. Don't go wandering off for the rest of the day, pinching soft billets for yourself and the Sergeant-Major and your other pals, as you usually do!"

Alphonso saluted guiltily—evidently the astute Cockerell had "touched the spot"—and was turning away, when suddenly the billeting officer's eye encountered an illegible scrawl at the very foot of his list.

"Stop a moment, Alphonso! I have forgotten those condemned machine-gunners, as usual. *Strafe* them! Come on! Once more into the breach, Alphonso! There is a little side-alley down here that we have not tried."

The indefatigable Cockerell turned down the *Rue Gambetta*, followed by Alphonso, faint but resigned.

"Here is the very place!" announced Cockerell almost at once. "This house, Number Five. We can put the gunners and their little guns into that stable at the back, and the officer can have a room in the house itself. *Sonnez*, for the last time before lunch!"

The door was opened by a pleasant-faced young woman of about thirty, who greeted Cockerell—tartan is always popular with French ladies—with a beaming smile, but shook her head regretfully upon seeing the *billet de logement* in his hand. The inevitable duet with Alphonso

followed. Presently Alphonso turned to his superior.

"Madame is ver' sorry, sair, but an *officier* is here already."

"Show me the *officier*!" replied the prosaic Cockerell.

The duet was resumed.

"Madame say," announced Alphonso presently, "that the *officier* is not here now; but he will return."

"So will Christmas! Meanwhile I am going to put an Emma Gee officer in here."

Alphonso's desperate attempt to translate the foregoing idiom into French was interrupted by Madame's retirement into the house, whither she beckoned Cockerell to follow her. In the front room she produced a frayed sheet of paper, which she proffered with an apologetic smile. The paper said—

This billet is entirely reserved for the Supply Officer of this District. It is not to be occupied by troops passing through the town.

By Order.

Lieutenant Cockerell whistled softly and vindictively through his teeth.

"Well," he said, "for consummate and concentrated nerve, give me the underlings of the A.S.C.! This pot-bellied blighter not only butts into an area which doesn't belong to him, but actually leaves a chit to warn people off the grass even when he isn't here! He hasn't signed the document, I observe. That means that he is a newly-joined subaltern, trying to get mis-

taken for a Brass Hat! I'll fix him!"

With great stateliness Lieutenant Cockerell tore the offending screed into four portions, to the audible concern of Madame. But the lieutenant smiled reassuringly upon her.

"*Je vous donnerai un autre, vous savez,*" he assured her.

He sat down at the table, tore a leaf from his Field Service Pocket Book, and wrote:—

The Supply Officer of the District is at liberty to occupy this billet only at such times as it is not required by the

troops of the Combatant Services.

*Signed, F. J. COCKERELL,
Lieut. & Asst. Adj.,
7th B. & W. Highes.*

"That's a pretty nasty one!" he observed with relish. Then, having pinned the insulting document conspicuously to the mantelpiece, he observed to the mystified lady of the house—

"Voilà, Madame. Si l'officier reviendra, je le verrai moi-même, avec grand plaisir. Bon jour!"

And with this dark saying Sparrow Cockerell took his departure.

II.

The Battalion, headed by their tatterdemalion pipers, stumped into the town in due course, and were met on the outskirts by the billeting party, who led the various companies to their appointed place. After inspecting their new quarters, and announcing with gloomy satisfaction that they were the worst, dirtiest, and most uncomfortable yet encountered, everybody settled down in the best place he could find, and proceeded to make himself remarkably snug.

Battalion Headquarters and the officers of "A" Company were billeted in an imposing mansion which actually boasted a bathroom. It is true that there was no water, but this deficiency was soon made good by a string of officers' servants

bearing buckets. Beginning with Colonel Kemp, who was preceded by an orderly bearing a small towel and a large loofah, each officer performed a ceremonial ablution; and it was a collection of what Major Wagstaffe, the Second-in-Command, termed "bright and bonny young faces" which collected round the mess table at seven o'clock.

It was in every sense a gala meal. Firstly, it was weeks since any one (except Second Lieutenant M'Corquodale, newly joined, and addressed, for painfully obvious reasons, as "Tich") had found himself at table in an apartment where it was possible to stand upright. Secondly, the Mess President had coaxed glass tumblers out of the ancient *concierge*; and only those who

have drunk from enamelled ironware for weeks on end can appreciate the pure joy of escape from the indeterminate metallic flavour which such vessels impart to all beverages. Thirdly, these same tumblers were filled to the brim with inferior but exhilarating champagne—purchased, as they euphemistically put it in the Supply Column, "locally." Lastly, the battalion had several months of hard fighting behind it, probably a full month's rest before it, and the conscience of duty done and recognition earned floating like a halo above it. For the moment, memories of Nightmare Wood and the Kidney Bean Redoubt—more especially the latter—were effaced. Even the sorrowful gaps in the ring round the table seemed less noticeable.

The menu, too, was almost pretentious. First came the *hors d'œuvres*—a tin of sardines. This was followed by what the Mess Corporal described as a savoury omelette, but which the Second-in-Command condemned as "a regrettable incident."

"It is false economy," he observed dryly to the Mess President, "to employ Mark One¹ eggs as anything but hand-grenades."

However, the tide of popular favour turned with the haggis, contributed by Lieutenant Angus M'Lachlan, from a parcel from home. Even the

fact that the mess-cook, an inexperienced æsthete from Islington, had endeavoured to tone down the naked repulsiveness of the dainty with discreet festoons of tinned macaroni, failed to arouse the resentment of a purely Scottish Mess. The next course—the beef ration, hacked into the inevitable gobbets and thinly disguised by a sprinkling of curry powder—aroused no enthusiasm; but the unexpected production of a large tin of Devonshire cream, contributed by Captain Bobby Little, relieved the canned peaches of their customary monotony. Last of all came a savoury—usually described as *the savoury*—consisting of a raft of toast per person, each raft carrying an abundant cargo of fried petted meat, and provided with a passenger in the shape of a recumbent sausage.

A compound of grounds and dish-water, described by the optimistic Mess Corporal as coffee, next made its appearance, mitigated by a bottle of Cointreau and a box of Panatellas; and the Mess turned itself to more intellectual refreshment. A heavy and long-overdue mail had been found waiting at St Gregoire. Letters had been devoured long ago. Now, each member of the Mess leaned back in his chair, straightened his weary legs under the table, and settled down, cigar in mouth, to the perusal of the *Spectator*

¹ In the British Army each issue of arms or equipment receives a distinctive "Mark." Mark 1 denotes the earliest issue.

or the *Tatler*, according to rank and literary taste.

Colonel Kemp, unfolding a week-old *Times*, looked over his glasses at his torpid disciples.

"Where is young Sandeman?" he inquired. Young Sandeman was the Adjutant.

"He went out to the Orderly Room, sir, five minutes ago," replied Bobby Little.

"I only want to give him to-morrow's Orders. No doubt he'll be back presently. I may as well mention to you fellows that I propose to allow the men three clear days' rest, except for bathing and re-clothing. After that we must do Company Drill, good and hard, so as to polish up the new draft, who are due to-morrow. I am going to start a bombing-school, too: at least seventy-five per cent of the Battalion ought to pass the test before we go back to the line. However, we need not rush things. We should be here in peace for at least a month. We must get up some sports, and I think it would be a sound scheme to have a sing-song one Saturday night. I was just saying, Sandeman"

—this to the Adjutant, who re-entered the room at that moment—"that it would be a sound——"

The Adjutant laid a pink field-telegram slip before his superior.

"This has just come in from Brigade Headquarters, sir," he said. "I have sent for the Sergeant-Major."

The Colonel adjusted his glasses and read the despatch. A deathly, sickening silence reigned in the room. Then he looked up.

"I am afraid I was a bit previous," he said quietly. "The Royal Stickeybacks have lost the Kidney Bean, and we are detailed to go up and retake it. Great compliment to the regiment, but a trifle mistimed! You young fellows had better go to bed. Parade at four A.M., sharp! Good-night! Come along to the Orderly Room, Sandeman."

The door closed, and the Mess, grinding the ends of their cigars into their coffee-cups, heaved themselves resignedly to their aching feet.

"There ain't," quoted Major Wagstaffe, "no word in the blooming language for it!"

III.

The Kidney Bean Redoubt is the key to a very considerable sector of trenches.

It lies just behind a low ridge. The two horns of the bean are drawn back out of sight of the enemy, but the middle swells forward over the skyline and commands an ex-

tensive view of the country beyond. Direct observation of artillery fire is possible: consequently an armoured observation post has been constructed here, from which Gunner officers can direct the fire of their batteries with accuracy and elegance. Lose the Kid-

ney Bean, and the boot is on the other leg. The enemy has the upper ground now: he can bring observed artillery fire to bear upon all our tenderest spots behind the line. He can also enfilade our front-line trenches.

Well, as already stated, the Seventeenth Royal Stickybacks had lost the Kidney Bean. They were a battalion of recent formation, stout-hearted fellows all, but new to the refinements of intensive trench warfare. When they took over the sector, they proceeded to leave undone various vital things which the Hairy Jooks had always made a point of doing, and to do various unnecessary things which the Hairy Jooks had never done. The observant Hun promptly recognised that he was faced by a fresh batch of opponents, and, having carefully studied the characteristics of the new-comers, prescribed and administered an exemplary dose of frightfulness. He began by tickling up the Stickybacks with an unpleasant engine called the *minenwerfer*, which despatches a large sausage-shaped projectile in a series of 'ridiculous somersaults, high over No Man's Land into the enemy's front-line trench, where it explodes and annihilates everything in that particular bay. Upon these occasions one's only chance of salvation is to make a rapid calculation as to the bay into which the sausage is going to fall, and then double speedily round a traverse—or, if possible, two traverses—into another. It is an exhilarating

pastime, but presents complications when played by a large number of persons in a restricted space, especially when the persons aforesaid are not unanimous as to the ultimate landing-place of the projectile.

After a day and a night of these aerial torpedoes the Hun proceeded to an intensive artillery bombardment. He had long coveted the Kidney Bean, and instinct told him that he would never have a better opportunity of capturing it than now. Accordingly, two hours before dawn, the Redoubt was subjected to a sudden, simultaneous, and converging fire from all the German artillery for many miles round, the whole being topped up with a rain of those crowning instruments of demoralisation, gas-shells. At the same time an elaborate curtain of shrapnel and high explosive was let down behind the Redoubt, to serve the double purpose of preventing either the sending up of reinforcements or the temporary withdrawal of the garrison.

At the first streak of dawn the bombardment was switched off, as if by a tap; the curtain fire was redoubled in volume; and a massed attack swept across the disintegrated wire into the shattered and pulverised Redoubt. Other attacks were launched on either flank; but these were obvious blinds, intended to prevent a too concentrated defence of the Kidney Bean. The Royal Stickybacks—what was left of them—put up a tough fight; but half of them were lying dead or buried, or both, before the assault was

launched, and the rest were too dazed and stupefied by noise and chlorine gas to withstand—much less to repel—the overwhelming phalanx that was hurled against them. One by one they went down, until the enemy troops, having swamped the Redoubt, gathered themselves up in a fresh wave and surged towards the reserve-line trenches, four hundred yards distant. At this point, however, they met a strong counter-attack, launched from the Brigade Reserve, and after heavy fighting were bundled back into the Redoubt itself. Here the German machine-guns had staked out a defensive line, and the German retirement came to a standstill.

Meanwhile a German digging party, many hundred strong, had been working madly in No Man's Land, striving to link up the newly acquired ground with the German lines. By the afternoon the Kidney Bean was not only "reversed and consolidated," but was actually included in the enemy's front trench-system. Altogether a well-planned and admirably executed little operation.

Forty-eight hours later the Kidney Bean Redoubt was recaptured, and remains in British hands to this day. Many arms of the Service took honourable part in the enterprise—heavy guns, field guns, trench-mortars, machine-guns, Sappers, and Pioneers; Infantry in various capacities. But this narrative is concerned only with the part played by the Seventh Hairy Jocks.

"Sorry to pull you back from rest, Colonel," said the Brigadier, when the commander of the Hairy Jocks reported; but the Divisional General considers that the only feasible way to hunt the Boche from the Kidney Bean is to bomb him out of it. That means trench-fighting, pure and simple. I have called you up because you fellows know the ins and outs of the Kidney Bean as no one else does. The Brigade who are in the line just now are quite new to the place. Here is an aeroplane photograph of the Redoubt, as at present constituted. Tell off your own bombing parties; make your own dispositions; send me a copy of your provisional Orders; and I will fit my plan in with yours. The Corps Commander has promised to back you with every gun, trench-mortar, culverin, and arquebus in his possession."

In due course Battalion Orders were issued and approved. They dealt with operations most barbarous amid localities of the most homelike sound. Number Nine Platoon, for instance (Commander, Lt. Cookerell), were to proceed in single file, carrying so many grenades per man, up Charing Cross Road, until stopped by the barrier which the enemy were understood to have erected in Trafalgar Square, where a bombing-post and at least one machine-gun would probably be encountered. At this point they were to wait until Trafalgar Square had been suitably dealt with

by a trench-mortar. (Here followed a paragraph addressed exclusively to the Trench Mortar Officer.) After this the bombers of Number Three Platoon would bomb their way across the Square and up the Strand. Another party would clear Northumberland Avenue, while a Lewis gun raked Whitehall. And so on. Every detail was thought out, down to the composition of the parties which were to "clean up" afterwards—that is, extract the reluctant Boche from various underground fastnesses well known to the extractors. The whole enterprise was then thoroughly rehearsed in some dummy trenches behind the line, until every one knew his exact part. Such is modern warfare.

Next day the Kidney Bean Redoubt was in British hands again. The Hun—what was left of him after an intensive bombardment of twenty-four hours—had betaken himself back over the ridge, *via* the remnants of his two new communication trenches, to his original front line. The two communication trenches themselves were blocked and sand-bagged, and were being heavily supervised by a pair of British machine-guns. Fighting in the Redoubt itself had almost ceased, though a humorous sergeant, followed by acolytes bearing bombs, was still "combing out" certain residential districts in the centre of the maze. Ever and anon he would stoop down at the entrance of some deep dug-out, and bawl—

"Ony mair doon there? Come away, Fritz! I'll gie ye five seconds. Yin, Twa, Three——"

Then, with a rush like a bolt of rabbits, two or three close-cropped, grimy Huns would scuttle up from below and project themselves from one of the exits; to be taken in charge by grinning Caledonians wearing "tin hats" very much awry, and escorted back through the barrage to the "prisoners' base" in rear.

All through the day, amidst unremitting shell fire and local counter-attack, the Hairy Jocks re-consolidated the Kidney Bean; and they were so far successful that when they handed over the work to another battalion at dusk, the parapet was restored, the machine-guns were in position, and a number of "knife-rest" barbed-wire entanglements were lying just behind the trench, ready to be hoisted over the parapet and joined together in a continuous defensive line as soon as the night was sufficiently dark.

One by one the members of Number Nine Platoon squelched—for it had rained hard all day—back to the reserve line. They were utterly exhausted, and still inclined to feel a little aggrieved at having been pulled out from rest; but they were well content. They had done the State some service, and they knew it; and they knew that the higher powers knew it too. There would be some very flattering reading in Divisional Orders in a few days' time.

Meanwhile, their most pressing need was for something to eat. To be sure, every man had gone into action that morning carrying his day's rations. But the British soldier, improvident as the grasshopper, carries his day's rations in one place, and one place only—his stomach. The Hairy Jocks had eaten what they required at their extremely early breakfast: the residue thereof they had abandoned.

About midnight Master Cockerell, in obedience to a most welcome order, led the remnants of his command, faint but triumphant, back from the reserve line to a road junction two miles in rear, known as Dead Dog Corner. Here the Battalion was to *rendezvous*, and march back by easy stages to St Gregoire. Their task was done.

But at the cross-roads Number Nine Platoon found no Battalion: only a solitary

subaltern, with his orderly. This young Casabianca informed Cockerell that he, Second Lieutenant Candlish, had been left behind to "bring in stragglers."

"Stragglers?" exclaimed the infuriated Cockerell. "Do we look like stragglers?"

"No," replied the youthful Candlish frankly; "you look more like sweeps. However, you had better push on. The Battalion isn't far ahead. The order is to march straight back to St Gregoire and re-occupy former billets."

"What about rations?"

"Rations? The Quartermaster was waiting here for us when we *rendezvoused*, and every man had a full ration and a tot of rum." (Number Nine Platoon cleared their parched throats expectantly.) "But I fancy he has gone on with the column. However, if you leg it you should catch them up. They can't be more than two miles ahead. So long!"

IV.

But the task was hopeless. Number Nine Platoon had been bombing, hacking, and digging all day. Several of them were slightly wounded—the serious cases had been taken off long ago by the stretcher-bearers—and Cockerell's own head was still dizzy from the fumes of a German gas-shell.

He lined up his disreputable paladins in the darkness, and spoke—

"Sergeant M'Nab, how many men are present?"

"Eighteen, sirr." The platoon had gone into action thirty-four strong.

"How many men are deficient of an emergency ration? I can make a good guess, but you had better find out."

Five minutes later the Sergeant reported. Cockerell's guess was correct. The British private has only one point of view about the portable pro-

perty of the State. To him, as an individual, the sacred emergency ration is an unnecessary encumbrance, and the carrying thereof a "fatigue." Consequently, when engaged in battle, one of the first (of many) things which he jettisons is this very ration. When all is over he reports with unctuous solemnity that the provender in question has been blown out of his haversack by a shell. The Quartermaster-Sergeant writes it off as "lost owing to the exigencies of military service," and indents for another.

Lieutenant Cockerell's haversack contained a packet of meat-lozenges and about half a pound of chocolate. These were presented to the Sergeant.

"Hand these round as far as they will go, Sergeant," said Cockerell. "They'll make a mouthful a man, anyhow. Tell the platoon to lie down for ten minutes: then we'll push off. It's only fifteen miles. We ought to make it by breakfast-time. . . ."

Slowly, mechanically, all through the winter night the victors hobbled along. Cockerell led the way, carrying the rifle of a man with a wounded arm. Occasionally he checked his bearings with map and electric torch. Sergeant M'Nab, who, under a hirsute and attenuated exterior, concealed a constitution of ferro-concrete and the heart of a lion, brought up the rear, uttering fallacious assurances to the faint-hearted as to the shortness of the dis-

tance now to be covered, and carrying two rifles.

The customary halts were observed. At ten minutes to four the men flung themselves down for the third time. They had covered about seven miles, and were still eight or nine from St Gregoire. The everlasting constellation of Verey lights still rose and fell upon the eastern horizon behind them, but the guns were silent.

"There might be a Heavy Battery dug in somewhere about here," mused Cockerell. "I wonder if we could touch them for a few tins of bully. Hallo, what's that?"

A distant rumble came from the north, and out of the darkness loomed a British motor-lorry, lurching and swaying along the rough cobbles of the *pavé*. Some of Cockerell's men were lying dead asleep in the middle of the road, right at the junction. The lorry was going twenty miles an hour.

"Get into the side of the road, you men!" shouted Cockerell, "or they'll run over you. You know what these M.T. drivers are!"

With indignant haste, and at the last possible moment, the kilted figures scattered to either side of the narrow causeway. The usual stereotyped and vitriolic remonstrances were hurled after the great hooded vehicle as it lurched past.

And then a most unusual thing happened. The lorry slowed down, and finally stopped, a hundred yards away. An officer descended,

and began to walk back. Cockerell rose to his weary feet and walked to meet him.

The officer wore a major's crown upon the shoulder-straps of his sheepskin-lined "British Warm," and the badge of the Army Service Corps upon his cap. Cockerell, indignant at the manner in which his platoon had been hustled off the road, saluted stiffly, and muttered: "Good morning, sir!"

"Good morning!" said the Major. He was a stout man of nearly fifty, with twinkling blue eyes and a short-clipped moustache. Cockerell judged him to be one of the few remnants of the original British Army.

"I stopped," explained the older man, "to apologise for the scandalous way that fellow drove over you. It was perfectly damnable; but you know what these converted taxi-drivers are! This swine forgot for the moment that he had an officer on board, and hogged it as usual. He goes under arrest as soon as we get back to billets."

"Thank you very much, sir," said Master Cockerell, entirely thawed. "I'm afraid my chaps were lying all over the road; but they are pretty well down and out at present."

"Where have you come from?" inquired the Major, turning a curious eye upon Cockerell's prostrate followers.

Cockerell explained. When he had finished, he added wistfully—

"I suppose you have not got

an odd tin or two of bully to give away, sir? My fellows are about——"

For answer, the Major took the Lieutenant by the arm and led him towards the lorry.

"You have come," he announced, "to the very man you want. I am practically Mr Harrod. In fact, I am a Brigade Supply Officer. How would a Maconochie apiece suit your boys?"

Cockerell, repressing the ecstatic phrases which crowded to his tongue, replied that that was just what the doctor had ordered.

"Where are you bound for?" continued the Major.

"St Gregoire."

"Of course. You were pulled out from there, weren't you? I am going to St Gregoire myself as soon as I have finished my round. Home to bed, in fact. I haven't had any sleep worth writing home about for four nights. It is no joke tearing about a country full of shell-holes, hunting for a Brigade that has shifted its ration-dump seven times in four days. However, I suppose things will settle down again, now that you fellows have fired Brother Boche out of the Kidney Bean. Pretty fine work, too! Tell me, what is your strength, here and now?"

"One officer," said Cockerell soberly, "and eighteen other ranks."

"All that's left of your platoon?"

Cockerell nodded. The stout

Major began to beat upon the tailboard of the lorry with his stick.

"Sergeant Smurthwaite!" he shouted.

There came a muffled grunt from the recesses of the lorry. Then a round and ruddy face rose like a harvest moon above the tailboard, and a stertorous voice replied respectfully—

"Sir?"

"Let down this tailboard; load this officer's platoon into the lorry; issue them with a Maconochie and a tot of rum apiece; and don't forget to put Smee under arrest for dangerous driving when we get back to billets."

"Very good, sir."

Ten minutes later the survivors of Number Nine Platoon, soaked to the skin, dazed, slightly incredulous, but at peace with all the world, reclined close-packed upon the floor of the swaying lorry. Each man held an open tin of Mr Maconochie's admirable ration between his knees. Perfect silence reigned: a pleasant aroma of rum mellowed the already vitiated atmosphere.

In front, beside the chastened Mr Smee, sat the Major and Master Cockerell. The latter had just partaken of his share of refreshment, and was now endeavouring, with lifeless fingers, to light a cigarette.

The Major scrutinised his guest intently. Then he stripped off his "British Warm" coat—incidentally revealing the fact that he wore

upon his tunic the ribbons of both South African Medals and the Distinguished Service Order—and threw it round Cockerell's shoulders.

"I'm sorry, boy!" he said. "I never noticed. You are chilled to the bone. Button this round you."

Cockerell made a feeble protest, but was cut short.

"Nonsense! There's no sense in taking risks after you've done your job."

Cockerell assented, a little sleepily. His allowance of rum was bringing its usual vulgar but comforting influence to bear upon an exhausted system.

"I see you have been wounded, sir," he observed, noting with a little surprise two gold stripes upon his host's left sleeve—the sleeve of a "non-combatant."

"Yes," said the Major. "I got the first one at Le Cateau. He was only a little fellow; but the second, which arrived at the Second Show at Ypres, gave me such a stiff leg that I am only an old crock now. I was second-in-command of an Infantry Battalion in those days. In these, I am only a peripatetic Lipton. However, I am lucky to be here at all: I've had twenty-seven years' service. How old are you?"

"Twenty," replied Cockerell. He was too tired to feel as ashamed as he usually did at having to confess to the tenderness of his years.

The Major nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes," he said; "I judged

that would be about the figure. My son would have been twenty this month, only—he was at Neuve Chapelle. He was very like you in appearance—very. You might as well take a nap for half an hour. I have two more calls to make, and we shan't get home till nearly

seven. Lean on me, old man. I'll see you don't tumble overboard. . . ."

So Lieutenant Cockerell, conqueror of the Kidney Bean, fell asleep, his head resting, with scandalous disregard for military etiquette, upon the shoulder of the stout Major.

V.

An hour or two later, Number Nine Platoon, distended with concentrated nourishment and painfully straightening its cramped limbs, decanted itself from the lorry into a little *cul-de-sac* opening off the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau in St Gregoire. The name of the *cul-de-sac* was the Rue Gambetta.

Their commander, awake and greatly refreshed, looked round him and realised, with a sudden sense of uneasiness, that he was in familiar surroundings. The lorry had stopped at the door of Number Five.

"I don't suppose your Battalion will get back for some time," said the Major. "Tell your Sergeant to put your men into the stable behind this house—there's plenty of straw there—and——"

"Their own billet is just round the corner, sir," replied Cockerell. "They might as well go there, thank you."

"Very good. But come in with me yourself, and doss here for a few hours. You can report to your C.O. later

in the day, when he arrives. This is my *pied-à-terre*"—rapping on the door. "You won't find many billets like it. As you see, it stands in this little backwater, and is not included in any of the regular billeting areas of the town. The Town Major has allotted it to me permanently. Pretty decent of him, wasn't it? And Madame Vinot is a dear. Here she is! *Bonjour, Madame Vinot! Avez-vous un feu—er—inflamé pour moi dans la chambre?*" Evidently the Major's French was on a par with Cockerell's.

But Madame understood him, bless her!

"*Mais oui, M'sieur le Colonel!*" she exclaimed cheerfully—the rank of Major is not recognised by the French civilian population—and threw open the door of the sitting-room, with a glance of compassion upon the Major's mud-splashed companion, whom she failed to recognise.

A bright fire was burning in the open stove.

Immediately above, pinned to the mantelpiece and flut-

tering in the draught, hung Cockerell's manifesto upon the subject of non-combatants. He could recognise his own handwriting across the room. The Major saw it too.

"Hallo, what's that hanging up, I wonder?" he exclaimed. "A memorandum for me, I expect: probably from my old friend 'Dados.'¹ Let us get a little more light."

He crossed to the window and drew up the blind. Cockerell moved too. When

the Major turned round, his guest was standing by the stove, his face scarlet through its grime.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir," said Cockerell, "but that notice—memorandum—of yours has dropped into the fire."

"If it came from Dados," replied the Major, "thank you very much!"

"I can't tell you, sir," added Cockerell humbly, "what a fool I feel."

But the apology referred to an entirely different matter.

¹ D.A.D.O.S. Deputy Assistant Director of Ordnance Stores.

REMINISCENCES OF THE KABUL CAMPAIGN, 1879-80.

BY THE RIGHT HON. SIR H. MORTIMER DURAND,
G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

IN the summer of 1879, when Lord Lytton was Viceroy of India, I was serving in the Foreign Office at Simla under its distinguished chief, Alfred Lyall.¹

Lord Lytton had come out to India three years before with instructions to enter upon a decided policy in Central Asia, and especially to re-establish our influence in Afghanistan beyond our North-West Frontier. He had carried out his instructions with ability and apparent success. It had been found necessary to declare war against the Afghan Amir, but the campaign had been short and decisive. The regular army which he had created had been shattered to pieces, the Amir himself had died a heart-broken fugitive, and his successor had made peace with us on our own terms. Sir Louis Cavagnari, a brave and capable frontier officer, had been appointed Envoy at his Court, and it seemed as if all our objects had been gained by one determined blow. At Simla, among the pines and the tall rhododendron trees of the Himalayas, Lord Lytton was resting from his labours and enjoying the triumph of his policy.

Early in July the British

Mission left India for Kabul. It was a dangerous post, for the Afghans were a turbulent fanatical race; and when we said good-bye to Cavagnari on Lyall's tennis-ground at "Innes's Own," some of us went back to our game with a feeling of depression which we found it difficult to shake off. But Cavagnari himself seemed perfectly confident, and for some weeks after his departure the reports from Kabul were satisfactory enough.

At the beginning of September the rainy season was drawing to a close. There had been thunderstorms and delicious breaks of fine weather, when a fresh breeze blew from the northward, from the long line of snowy peaks which glistened against the cloudless sky. On the morning of the 5th I had gone out for my early ride in the Simla woods, where the delicate tree-ferns were fading and turning golden in the sunshine. When I got back I found a note from Lyall asking me to go over at once to his house, and remounting my pony I cantered down the narrow road as fast as I could. On arrival I saw from Lyall's face that something dreadful had happened, and then he told me. He said there was bad news from

¹ Afterwards the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Lyall, K.C.B., G.C.I.E.

Kabul, that the Afghan troops had risen and attacked the Residency, and that he feared the whole Mission and escort had been massacred. As the day wore on further telegrams came in, and the first reports were confirmed. The short-lived peace and triumph were at an end, and the Government of India had to make ready for a fresh campaign in Afghanistan.

The preparations were soon complete. In the preceding year three columns had crossed our frontier from north, centre, and south, to attack the Amir's troops. Of these columns the centre one, under Sir Frederick Roberts, was the only one now in a condition to strike an immediate blow. It was therefore selected for the duty of marching on Kabul and avenging the massacre. General Roberts was then in Simla, and received his instructions the same day.

He chose for his chief of the staff Colonel Charles MacGregor¹ of the Quartermaster-General's Department. In the afternoon MacGregor, who was my brother-in-law and my greatest friend, came into my room at the Foreign Office, told me he hoped to go, and asked me whether I should care to go also, as a "Political" officer, if I got the chance. The custom in those days was to attach political officers to all Indian forces in the field, their duty being to deal with the people of the country, collect information, and other-

wise help the general in command. I was not a soldier, but I had always hoped for an opening of this kind, and of course I said yes, gladly. The next morning, in the verandah of Government House, Lyall told me that General Roberts had applied for my services as Political Secretary on his staff.

At that time I did not know General Roberts well, but we had often met; and I had found him most courteous and pleasant. That I had now been nominated to serve on his staff in a campaign of such importance seemed almost too good to be true; for at that time all eyes in India were turned upon Afghanistan, where, as it seemed, the great conflict between England and Russia for the mastery of the East must sooner or later be decided. Moreover, I had a hereditary interest in the country, for my father had served in the first Afghan war forty years earlier as an officer of Engineers, and had distinguished himself by blowing open the gate of the fortress of Ghazni. He had afterwards written a history of the war. I longed to follow in his footsteps, and to see with my own eyes the scenes about which I had read so much.

I fear that in my ardour for service beyond the frontier I hardly gave enough thought to my wife, and the boy who had been born to us three years before; but she took the news with the quiet

¹ Afterwards Major-General Sir Charles MacGregor, K.C.B.

courage that never failed her; and during the few days that elapsed before I had to leave Simla, she did everything she could to help me. My departure on service being entirely unexpected, I had to make a few preparations and purchases; and as I was to leave on the 9th, and the 7th was a Sunday, I had only the Monday for shopping. But MacGregor had lent me one of his swords, a heavy basket-hilted claymore, which he said, with a short laugh, I should find more useful in Afghanistan than the fancy weapon which political officers wore with their diplomatic uniforms—a weapon, by the way, which made soldiers blaspheme, for it had an ivory hilt like a General's. My purchases were soon completed. They consisted chiefly of a big double-barrelled pistol carrying the regulation Snider cartridge, ten pounds of cake tobacco, and two or three briar pipes. We were limited to eighty pounds of baggage; but I was determined not to run short of tobacco, and during many a rough march afterwards I was very thankful for it. Those were not the days of cigarettes. As we walked back to our house—"Courteen Hall"—every one we met congratulated me, and assured my wife that the campaign would be over by Christmas. Then we fired a few rounds at a wine case to try the new weapon—which kicked abominably. On the Tuesday morning I said good-bye to my wife and child, and walked down to the little

pony "tonga" which was waiting in the road below.

We had at that time an Indian "aya," one of the most faithful servants I ever knew, whose business in life was to look after my small boy, and spoil him to the utmost of her power. She was a dear old woman, with a pleasant ugly face, and a wonderful store of Indian folk wisdom. She had also an uncanny knowledge of the ways of the English, and a quaint trick of quoting odds and ends of English rhyme.

One afternoon during that summer, a day of incessant rain, when we could not ride, I was pacing up and down my room, whistling, when I was suddenly aware of old Kesa standing in front of me stamping her foot and swearing like a wild cat. I stopped in surprise, for it was very unlike an Indian woman, and asked what on earth was the matter. "What is the matter?" she said. "Don't I know the tune the band plays when the Sahib-lok bury their dead? And you have a small 'baba' in the house. Shame! shame!" Then I realised that I had been whistling the Dead March in Saul. I was made to promise faithfully that I would never do it again—after which she went off grumbling.

On the morning of the 9th September, when I walked out of the house, feeling guilty and sad, I found old Kesa standing halfway down the bridle-path, and stopped to speak to her. She kissed my hand and said in Hindustani, "God be your pro-

tector," and then broke into one of her English tags: "Good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye." It made me laugh and feel better.

That night I joined the train at Ambala, and found in my carriage three young officers of the 9th Lanciers who were rejoining their regiment. One of them turned out to be a man whom I had always regarded as a cousin—Bloomfield Gough. He belonged to the well-known family who have given so many good soldiers to the army; and he afterwards commanded the regiment in South Africa. In 1879 he was a merry blue-eyed fellow, who had, I think, just got his troop. It was said that he had persuaded his father to put him into the cavalry by the argument that he really could not "march": if the Almighty had intended him to march He would have given him four legs. Another fellow-traveller on this journey was the well-known Bishop of Lahore, French, an equally pleasant companion, of a somewhat different type.

The railway had not then been carried farther than Jhelum, and I had to get to the frontier, 150 miles or so beyond, in a "dak gari"—a long box on wheels drawn by ponies. In common with the rest of the Indian world, I had little opinion of the Afghans as fighting men, and I see that in my diary there is an entry written at Jhelum: "I hope there may be fighting—which would simplify matters—but much fear the mutinous regiments will disperse and give

us only hunting work." The fear was groundless. We were to have plenty of fighting before the campaign was over.

A twenty-four hours' drive brought me to Peshawar on the morning of the 12th, and there I spent a day with Colonel Waterfield, the Commissioner, a well-known frontier officer, whose house was always open to wayfarers. Hundreds of us had reason to bless him and his charming wife before the war was over.

It had been impossible for me to march my horses to the frontier in time for the advance, and I had to trust to what I could pick up at Peshawar, which was a noted mart for Kabuli horse-dealers; but the place was crowded with officers going to the front, and the bazaar had been swept clean. MacGregor, who had gone up a day earlier, had managed to get me a very fair pony about fourteen hands high; and after some hours search I discovered in charge of a native "sais" a gaunt chestnut Australian of uncertain age, with protruding ribs and a Roman nose, which was for sale very cheap. I felt there must be something wrong about him; but he seemed sound, and was evidently up to weight; so, old and ugly as he was, I got on his back and tried him. He trotted with his feet an inch from the ground, snorting, his ewe neck bent back, his short mane bristling, and his camel-like head in the air; and his canter was rough beyond words; but he took a small jump or two quite freely,

and as I could not afford to lose a chance, I bought him.

Next day I was to go on some forty miles down the frontier to Kohat, and I sent the horses in advance to do half the march, up to the mouth of the Kohat pass, intending to catch them up in the morning in a native cart which Waterfield had got for me. This I did, and I then discovered what was wrong with my new "waler." I found him picketed in the open, and walked up to him to make friends. As I did so I heard a warning shout, and at the same moment the beast came at me open-mouthed, with mad white eyes and gleaming yellow teeth. I jumped aside and he missed me, and then lashed out savagely with his heels. Happily the picket ropes held, and his sais, Purai, ran up and secured him. The man had taken service with me, and seemed fond of his unpleasant charge. He admitted that the horse was "slightly an evil liver," and did not like the sahib-lok; but he said it would not bite while he was holding its head. With that I had to be content, and I rode the horse all the way to Kabul; but I had to be careful in mounting him, and very careful not to get a fall.

Our march through the wild and picturesque pass was not imposing. There were no mules to be got for my baggage; but at last my Persian writer, who was with me, managed to find four donkeys of the tiny Indian

breed, no bigger than sheep, and on these the boxes were loaded. They floundered about pitifully, poor little beasts, on the boulder-strewn track, and we got along very slowly, for the heat among the rocks was tremendous. And when at last we reached the Kohat rest-house about half-past eleven at night, all that the man in charge could produce for us in the way of food and drink was some stale "chupatis," a morsel of dry yellow cheese at the bottom of a tin, and a bottle of tepid water. But we were tired, so we spread our bedding on the dirty matted floor, and slept the sleep of the just.

From Kohat the road to the place where I was to join General Roberts, Ali Khel, lay along the mountain frontier to Thull, and thence up the Kurram valley, a desolate stony tract with a shallow river running down it. My two companions on the march were Neville Chamberlain¹ of the Central India Horse and Brabazon² of the 10th Hussars, who were going up, one as A.D.C. to General Roberts and the other as Brigade-Major to General Massy, commanding the Cavalry Brigade.

As I wrote some years later, in a story based upon these experiences—'Helen Treveryan,'—there are few things on earth, if any, to come up to the joy of starting on a first campaign, when the head and

¹ Now Colonel Sir Neville Chamberlain, K.C.B., K.C.V.O.

² Now Major-General Sir John Brabazon, K.C.B., C.V.O.

the heart are young. Behind lie civilisation and its tram-mels; before are freedom and excitement, and the hope of seeing great deeds, and the chance of distinction. So, although we were riding into a stony wilderness ringed round by barren hills, though the sun was fierce and the pace was slow—for we could not leave our servants and baggage—yet it seemed to me that everything was delightful. Before my eyes floated a golden haze, the light that never was on sea or land.

On the 19th September we rode into a place called Badesh Khel, where we found some of the 5th Punjab Cavalry—a fine frontier regiment—under the command of a well-known officer, “Red Stewart.”¹ We were hot and dusty, and the sun had peeled our faces, so we thought a bathe in the river would be pleasant. It was a rough bathe for me. There was a little stony island in mid-stream, and I tried to wade out to it; but stepping carelessly I was swept off my feet by the current, and in an instant found myself being rolled over and over upon the smooth boulders, which gave under a touch. Somehow, more by luck than anything else, I came out upon the tail of the island; but I had swallowed much water, and my knees were badly bruised, and my finger-nails broken by my efforts to get hold of the stony bottom.

For a few seconds I really thought I should be carried away and drowned in three feet of water. And having got out I had to get back, which was an unpleasant prospect. In these circumstances I was distressed by the conduct of Brabazon and Chamberlain, whose laughter and chaff were most unfeeling. But in the end I had to laugh too, and by great care I managed the return passage without another mishap.

We had undressed in a little break of the six-foot cliff, and when we dressed again, being unaccustomed to carry weapons, I forgot my double-barrelled pistol, which I had taken out of my belt and laid down on the stones. I did not miss it for some time; but on return to my tent after a pleasant dinner with the 5th Cavalry, my servant asked me where the pistol was, and I remembered that I had left it by the river-side. This man, “Kulloo,” was a fine big fellow, a water-carrier by trade, who had volunteered to come with me as a body servant; and though very rough, had proved invaluable in his way. I was tired, and rather inclined to leave the pistol where it was till daybreak, arguing that if it had not been taken already no one would be likely to find it in the darkness. Moreover, that day was a Mahomedan religious festival, and we had been warned that we were likely to be sniped during the night by the tribesmen, so it

¹ Now Major-General J. Stewart, C.B.

was likely enough that parties of them might be prowling about near the camp. But Kulloo was quite firm on the subject, insisting that we must go at once and search. He explained to me that if it had been a sword it would not have mattered, but the pistol could not be replaced. "Jān hai," he said, "It is your life." So we sallied out across the fields to the river, I armed with MacGregor's claymore, and Kulloo with an Indian sword I had given him. He assured me the tribesmen were "kuch nahin"—nothing at all—and in this conviction he carried a lantern. By good luck we hit off the break in the cliff where I had undressed, and at once found the pistol, getting back safely without meeting any one. Kulloo was greatly pleased with the performance, and I often blessed him afterwards; but MacGregor, whom I found next day in Kurram, was very wroth when I told him the story, and said he would never have lent me his sword if he had known I was going to be so damned careless with it.

MacGregor seemed to me at that time, and afterwards, the ideal of what a soldier should be. Physically he was a man of powerful frame, with short legs and long arms like the famous Rob Roy, from whom he claimed descent. He had a commanding face, with aquiline nose and fine but rather stern hazel eyes. His heavy

moustache and short peaked beard reminded one, as I used to tell him, of a French corporal of the Second Empire. His crisp copper-coloured hair, just touched with grey, was as thick as a door-mat. His manner was gruff, and made him enemies; but a more tender-hearted man I never knew, nor a keener and more studious soldier. Reckless exposure to every kind of hardship sapped his splendid health, and he died comparatively young. It was a great loss to the army.

At Kurram MacGregor was inspecting the transport, which was insufficient and in bad condition, the mules not having recovered from the exertions of the previous campaign. Although the force entrusted to General Roberts was small—7500 men, of whom he had to leave some behind to keep open his communications—the transport was hardly enough for half the number. But it had to do, for the advance could not be delayed.

Every one knows the result of this advance, which has been described in detail by General Roberts himself in his book, 'Forty-one Years in India.' My purpose here is not to tell the whole story again, but to give a few personal reminiscences of the time, and of the scenes and the men I saw in the course of it.

On the 21st September I marched with Colonel Hudson¹ of the 28th Native Infantry to Ali Khel. Colonel Hudson was

¹ Afterwards Lieut.-General Sir John Hudson, K.C.B., Commander-in-Chief in Bombay.

a spare, grave man, with a quiet manner, who, in the little hut where three or four of us slept at Kurram, read his Bible and said his prayers as simply as if he had been alone. Some months later, when the country rose against us and the Kabul force was besieged, he proved himself a staunch soldier, holding an exposed post on the line of communications with a calm steadfastness which gained him much credit. His defences consisted of a low wall of piled stones, and his force was small; but the flickering heliograph, for which we used to watch with anxiety, brought us no message from him that was not cheerful and confident. He was one of a type not rare in India a generation before, in the days of Henry Lawrence and his friends—men whose religion was the very backbone of their character.

"The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust;
His soul is with the saints, I trust."

We rode together to the Peiwar Kotal, where General Roberts had beaten the Afghans the year before and made a name for himself. It impressed us greatly. The position held by the Afghans was in dense forest, and towered two thousand feet above the plain from which it had to be approached and stormed. I see that I noted in my diary: "The approach is hummed in by commanding spurs, and the road to the Kotal itself winds up an almost perpendicular hillside. Our horses, though the road is now much improved, could only do it in

scrambling bursts of fifty yards or so." It was a fine feat to drive a superior force out of such a position.

At the Peiwar cantonment, "a dreary, dusty, cold place, cleared of pines," we found General Massy and his staff-officer, Gerald Morton, in the costume I was to know so well—posteens or sheepskin coats, the wool inside, and the skin embroidered with yellow silk and faced with astrakan. It was a picturesque uniform, and, as I speedily found, the only one which kept out the Afghan cold. General Massy—"Redan Massy" as he was called—had won a name for himself, as a young man, in the Crimea many years before. I knew him very slightly, but he was most courteous and pleasant. After lunch with him we rode on another twelve miles, and soon after sunset arrived at Ali Khel—the camp looking "very picturesque with its numerous fires covering the plateaux below the last turn of the road." Here I reported myself to my new Chief, General Roberts, who, I see from my diary, "received me very cordially," and kept me to dinner.

This was my first real meeting with the great soldier whom I was afterwards to know so well. His winning manner and cheery, simple ways, entirely free from any assumption of superiority, made me feel at home before I had been with him five minutes; and though I found at times in the course of the campaign that I could not wholly agree with his views upon political questions, the

liking with which he inspired me from the first deepened as time went on into a very real affection. This power of winning the hearts of men was one of the main secrets of his great success, for it made them follow him with an enthusiasm which even his brilliant qualities as a soldier would hardly have called forth. It was a great gift, which perhaps no English commander of note has ever possessed in the same degree since the days of Nelson.

The morning after my arrival in Ali Khel I began my political work by attending a conference between the General and the Afghan envoys whom the Amir had sent to stop, if possible, the advance of our force on Kabul. It was, I note in my diary, "a curious Durbar, round a small camp-table indifferently clean," and the two Afghans, naturally enough, seemed very uncomfortable. Their consciences must have been troubling them for the massacre of the mission, and they could not have failed to see how they were regarded by the men of the regiments they had passed through on their way to the General's headquarters. At that time, for Englishmen and Indians alike, there was no good Afghan but a dead Afghan. The Sikhs especially, who for generations had detested Mahomedans in general and Afghans in particular, made no secret of their feelings; nor did the Gurkhas, who had an old score to settle; and I daresay the envoys thought their lives were no more safe than Cavagnari's had been.

But they carried out their mission loyally, trying hard for the next three or four days to persuade the General to stay where he was and let the Amir deal with the mutinous troops, or, if we must come on, to advance in such force as to make resistance hopeless, which would have meant much delay. Finding that all their arguments were in vain, they finally gave in, telling us the Amir would probably come himself; and by sunrise on the 26th they were gone—very glad, no doubt, to get away.

My business during this time was to take notes of all that went on at the several interviews, and to condense the information, and the General's proposals, into telegrams and despatches. Luckily I had been able by that time to pass my examinations, and acquire a working knowledge of Persian—the *lingua Franca* of the Mahomedan East, in which the proceedings were carried on—so I found them easy enough to follow, and interesting. The small camp-table stood in an almost equally small "shami-ana" or open tent. There the General, in his undress uniform, always as neat as if he were at Aldershot, discussed matters with the two bearded Afghans in their gold-embroidered dressing-gowns of camels' hair; and there was barely room for the three or four officers in attendance. It was essentially a camp Durbar, with no "frills," and no want of plain speaking.

All this time we were receiving unpleasant reports about the attitude of the

mountain tribes, both in our front and rear, and of the preparations being made to resist us. On the 23rd, I see by my diary, we had news that a telegraph party had been cut up ahead of us—over twenty of our people killed—and seventy of our precious mules carried off. Then came reports that there were twenty Afghan regiments waiting for us in Kabul, and that the Russians were sending 20,000 men from the north to help them. It required much courage to disregard all these dangers, and launch out upon the plains of Afghanistan with five or six thousand men, and no hope of any support from behind for months to come. Happily we had a leader whose resolution never faltered, and on the 27th of September, the bulk of the troops having already gone forward, the General and his Headquarters marched from Ali Khel, bringing up the rear.

Ali Khel and the line of communication through Kurram were left in charge of Brigadier-General Gordon¹—"Tom Gordon"—an officer of some thirty years' service, who had seen fighting in the Mutiny, on the frontier, and elsewhere, and had also held various political posts. His strong point, indeed, was political work. He was a good Persian scholar, with some literary aptitude, and had the good-tempered, patient manner which is of so much advantage in dealing with Orientals. I well remember the kindness and courtesy with which he treated me, taking

me with him round the position, and showing me the various points where night attacks by the mountain tribesmen were likely to take place. He had a pleasant Scottish speech, and the quiet humour which, whatever Englishmen may think, characterises so many of his countrymen. Neither then nor ever did I see him lose his temper, or hear him say an ill-natured thing of any one. He finished his career as Military Secretary at the British Legation in Persia, where he did excellent work. Three years ago he died in London, full of years. The "gay Gordons" have long been proverbial for cheery courage. None of them, I think, ever faced death more gallantly than the old soldier who, feeling its hand upon him, sent word to his friends one by one, and sadly worn, but interested as ever in all that concerned them, spent a few minutes with each in quiet talk "before I leave." That was Tom Gordon all over. He had always lived like a gentleman, and he died like a gentleman.

On the 27th September I saw my first shot fired. We were to march to the top of a pass called the Shuttur Gardan, the camel's neck, and the first part of the march was rough, stony work, along the dry bed of a river, with wooded peaks about us. As we rode, we got news that 2000 Mungul tribesmen were "out" ahead of us, and meant fighting. "This was not much believed," I find in my diary

¹ Afterwards General Sir Thomas Gordon, K.C.B., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

of the day, "but a halt was ordered, the 23th were sent word to close up, and a party of the 5th P. C. were sent on to reconnoitre. The latter soon found there was something, and we heard a pretty smart rattle break out ahead. Vousden,¹ who was in command, got his horse shot. Supports were then pushed on, including a small party of the 92nd, who were with us, and a messenger was sent forward over the hills to Karatiga to turn out the troops there on the Munguls' rear. We advanced gradually—the flanking parties clearing the way—until we reached a narrow rough bit of road, where fir-clad spurs ran down close to the stream. We had halted here, and I was just thinking how close we were round the General in a lump, . . . when there was a crash from a knoll above us, about 200 or 250 yards off, and a shower of bullets came whizzing about our heads; . . . but only one man, Dr Townshend,² had been hit, and we got only a few dropping shots afterwards. The Karatiga troops were soon out, and it was very pretty to see them driving the Munguls from point to point. About 40 are said to have been killed. We lost 5 men of the 3rd Sikhs, who were surrounded. One of these died well. He was shot, and knew the devils would finish him. Handing over his rifle and belt to another man with him, he said, 'Bhago, Bhai,

bhago. Sarkar ka hai. Ham ko ehhor do.' ('Run, brother, run. It belongs to the Government. Never mind me.') A moment later he was out to pieces."

The story, if I remember right, was told to me on the spot. I had not dismounted while we were waiting, because I knew that if I did my horse would probably eat me; and a few minutes later the General told me to go across the stream to recall a party of our men. I had to gallop over a bed of loose stones, and have a vivid recollection of holding the horse's head very hard, in mortal fear lest he should come down and throw me—when the temptation would doubtless have been too much for him. Luckily he kept on his legs, and as I was riding back an officer told me the story. It was a fine example of the devotion of our Indian soldiery.

My diary goes on: "Arrived at the Shutur Gardan very late in consequence of this business, and bitterly cold. Josephs of the Telegraphs met me and took me off to dinner. . . . I fell dead asleep immediately after it, and when I woke found Kulloo had done the same and never pitched my tent." The Shutur Gardan was 11,000 feet high, and the night on the hillside, after a day in the hot defile below, was rather trying.

The next day we marched down to Afghan soil at Kushi, and found the Amir had come

¹ Afterwards Colonel Vousden, V.C.

² The chief medical officer.

into our camp, "bolting from Kabul on pretence of taking a walk." At Kushi we halted two or three days, and I attended two interviews between the fugitive ruler and the General, while the cavalry pushed out ahead down the broad valley which led to Kabul. I was feeling ill, but the interviews were interesting. In his youth the Amir Yakub Khan had been the Hotspur of the Afghans, and his reputation had stood very high. But he was now broken by the long imprisonment in which he had been kept by his father, and I noted in my diary: "He is by no means the fine young soldier I used to imagine him—a weak, vacillating face—pleasant enough at times—but not trustworthy or in any way impressive. . . . He seemed very nervous and fidgety." Well he might be, for though we were supposed to be advancing to restore his authority, overthrown by rebels, we were rather pointed in our attentions. The forms of friendship were duly observed. The General paid a public visit to His Highness, and His Highness paid a return visit to the General, and they were exceedingly polite to one another; but there was something rather grim about the guard of Highlanders with the sun on their bayonets, and all around were the bronzed half-contemptuous faces of English officers in their khaki fighting clothes. Every one of them believed the Amir to be guilty of the treacherous massacre of our Mission, as did every Indian in the Force;

and Yakub can hardly have failed to realise the feeling of the camp.

After that we marched on up the Logar valley, not very fast, for the transport mules had to do double work, first carrying the baggage of half the Force, and then going back to bring on the other half. It was a risky proceeding, because most of the time the General had no more than half his troops together; but it could not be helped. On the 5th October we arrived at the end of the valley, and in the morning found the road barred by the Afghans, who had taken up a strong position, with a good many guns, on a line of hills near the village of Char Asia—the four mills. There General Roberts attacked and completely defeated them, thus opening the way to Kabul, which lay beyond the hills a few miles ahead. It was a daring attack, for one of his two brigades of infantry was a march behind waiting for transport, and the Force in advance was heavily outnumbered by the enemy. But General Roberts knew that even a day's delay would greatly encourage the Afghans, and probably bring to swell their ranks a large gathering of tribesmen from the neighbouring hills and valleys. In Afghanistan it was literally the case that every village was a fort and every man a soldier, so that armies seemed to swarm out of the earth like ants. He acted, therefore, as his whole nature impelled him to do, upon the traditional maxim of the British in India,

"when in doubt attack," and once more the maxim was justified by results. There was no further stand on the part of the enemy, and a day or two later the guilty capital was at our mercy.

Personally I saw nothing of the fight at Charasia. At Kushi I had broken down with a sharp attack of jaundice and fever, the result of my night on the Shutur Gardan, and when we marched up the valley the General's doctor, Owen,¹ put me into a hospital "doolee." It was not a pleasant experience. The force marched with its baggage and other impedimenta well closed up in the centre, as we had hostile or doubtful tribesmen in the hills on both flanks, and the Legar valley being very dry, the dust from the trampling of men and animals rose about us in one unceasing cloud. A doolee is close to the ground, and gets the thickest of the dust, so that at times I found myself literally gasping for breath. With constant sickness and fever in these conditions, the marches seemed very long. But Owen did his best for me, and pulled me through somehow. At Charasia I was conscious, but "could only lie and hear the guns, and long to be out." It was a fine little fight, and I thought myself cruelly unfortunate. However, the illness did not last long, and in a week I was nearly fit for work again. We were then camped on the Siah Sang, or Black Stone,

heights, less than a mile from the city, and the Amir had a small camp just below.

There was to be a formal entry into the Citadel on the 12th October, the Amir going with the General; and a proclamation was to be read to the assembled notables of Afghanistan, explaining the arrangements for the future government of the country and the punishment of evil-doers. The drafting of this proclamation gave me an excellent example of the General's patience and good temper.

He had originally drafted it himself; and on the evening of the 10th, as I was lying in my doolee, Major Hastings, the chief Political Officer, brought it to me from the General, "for any remarks I might have to offer." General Roberts had not at that time much practice in writing papers of this kind, and neither Hastings nor I liked the wording of the proclamation. It seemed to us to be open to misconstruction, and likely in some ways to do harm. But Hastings had given his opinion, and asked me to go to the General myself. Accordingly, I hardened my heart, and early next morning took the paper over to the General's tent. There, seated on a mule trunk, for the little tent had only one chair, and feeling anxious lest I should annoy or worry him, I went over the proclamation paragraph by paragraph and pointed out what I thought undesirable. I could not help being struck

¹ Now Lieut.-Colonel Owen, C.M.G., C.I.E.

by the way in which he took it all, for he had evidently devoted much trouble to his draft, and my objections were comprehensive. But he heard me out, never showing a sign of the irritation which would have been natural enough in the circumstances; and eventually, with a laughing complaint that I had cut out all his best bits, he agreed to make most of the omissions I had suggested. I left his tent much relieved, and determined not to worry him again if I could help it. But I fear I often did.

Hastings,¹ whom I afterwards got to know well, was a man of very attractive character. Brave and cool in danger, he never sought it; and in all ways he seemed free from the usual craving for distinction. He did his duty well, whatever it might be; but he was modest and retiring to a fault, and did not get half the credit he deserved. At the same time, every one trusted him, and none more thoroughly than the rough frontier folk with whom he had to deal. I was often asked by Afghans, who had received a written promise, to get it signed by Hastings. Once I pointed out to a man that his paper had been signed by the General himself. He fidgeted and apologised, but stuck to his request. Hastings was just a quiet-mannered English gentleman, with a long, fair moustache and rather tired blue eyes, which had in them no look of command, yet he was a power for good on the border.

He died not many years later, to the regret of all who knew him.

The Amir did not attend the ceremony at the Citadel, for early on the morning of the 12th he walked up from his camp with a couple of servants and resigned the throne he had held only a few months. Whatever his faults, it was a pitiable scene. I quote from my diary:—

“He said he wished to see the General, and on being admitted immediately tendered his abdication. His life, he said, had been a miserable one, and he could bear it no longer. Better be a grass-cutter in the English camp than ruler of Afghanistan. ‘You see,’ he said, ‘what the people are. Who would rule over them? I have fought battles for the Ameership like my father and grandfather before me, but it is all over now. I have done with them. Let me go to India or London—anywhere you will—so long as I leave Afghanistan for ever. They rebelled against my father and abandoned him in his need. Now they have rebelled against me. I have not one friend in the country—not one friend.’ The General begged him to think well over it, put a tent at his disposal, and promised to see him again at 10. Accordingly, we came together soon after 10—Hastings, the General, and myself—and the Ameer was brought in. He could not be induced to think over the matter again or to accompany the General to the Bala Hissar. The man seemed utterly broken,

¹ Afterwards Colonel Hastings, C.B.

his eyes red and swollen, his body bowed helplessly forward, with prostration in every line, and his voice tearful and quivering. At last the General agreed to his not going to the Bala Hissar, and promised to send in his abdication to the Viceroy, but said he must remain titular Ameer until the answer came. He said he would do as he was told, but that he would not leave our camp or see his people again, excepting his three boys, whom he wished to accompany him into retirement." Going to his tent later in the day I found him, to quote my diary, "lying in a corner with eyes like a hunted beast's."

The abdication was eventually accepted, and some weeks later the Amir was sent away to India. He was not a man of strong character. During the attack on the Residency he showed irresolution, if not apathy, and some of his later proceedings were suspicious. But he had a terribly difficult game to play, for when called to the throne he had no hold on his unruly people, and the rising came before he had time to strengthen himself. I do not believe he wished for the massacre of the mission, by which he had little to gain and much to lose. This was my view in 1879, and as it was opposed to the view generally held in camp, I found my position in some ways rather uncomfortable.

At noon on the 12th October "we formed procession for the formal entry — young Musa Khan (the heir-apparent) going in lieu of his father. Troops

lined the road all the way; and but for an absurd *contretemps* when we arrived—the gate of the selected house being shut, which caused delay and an undignified stoppage outside—the ceremony would have been unexceptionable." The General read out his proclamation from a balcony overlooking a walled garden, the Afghan notables being all assembled to hear it. They impressed me unfavourably—"not one aristocratic face among them all." But when at the end of the ceremony they were told that some of the prominent Ministers must for the present be placed under arrest, they received the announcement with dignified composure.

The Afghans often call themselves Ben-i-Israel, and have a tradition that they are descendants of the lost tribes. Some of them even told me when I was in Kabul that the name Afghan was derived from that of the chief who led the Israelite migration into their country. He was called Pikáh, and his followers Pikahán or Apikahán. But such derivations are not usually worth much. All that can be said is that the Afghans have a strong touch of the Israelite, both in appearance and character. In courage, and in some other qualities, they are one of the finest races of the East. Sir Thomas Holdich has written an interesting paper on this subject, and shows that Lord Roberts believed in the tradition.

I had been able to ride down with the General, but was still weak and in pain,

so fell out when we arrived in the Citadel, and watched the ceremony from a dark corner lying on a pile of rugs. I had intended going, after it was over, to see the Residency, where our people lived and were slaughtered. The General wanted me for some work, and I had to put this off; but I went three days later and saw it all, under the guidance of a native officer, Muhammad Karím, who had been present at the beginning of the attack. It was a sad sight. The position was a hopeless one, for the house was surrounded by native buildings, and commanded almost at pistol-range by the upper citadel. In the verandah and lower rooms of Cavagnari's quarters some human bones, charred books, and other relics had been collected; but it was difficult to get any accurate information as to the course of the fight or the graves of our dead. The main building, I wrote in my diary, "has fallen in from fire, leaving only the side walls and corners standing. Of course all the walls, inside and out, are riddled with bullets. . . . Hamilton¹ seems to have behaved nobly, charging out time after time, sword in hand, to clear the gun which the mutineers had run up close to the walls. He succeeded, they say, in driving the gunners off three times, almost single-handed, but at last fell by the gun, covered with wounds. All honour to him for a gallant death." Muhammad Karím told me

that all the Afghans talked of him; "they talk of him still. They say he was Shaitán, a devil." Hamilton was not the only man who died well that day. All the British officers present sold their lives dearly, and the little escort of seventy-five men, Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Mussulmans, fought desperately to the end. Muhammad Karím had not seen the end, as he was sent out with a message to the Amir; but he showed us a small room, one of a row, built against the wall of the inner courtyard, and said that, according to the Afghans, the last men left fighting were two Sikhs who got into this room and fired through the doorway. The mutineers were firing at them from all sides, but the Sikhs only laughed and kept calling out "Come on; why don't you come and kill us? How many Patháns does it take to kill two Sikhs?" At last some Afghans bored through the mud wall, and shot them from the side. I went and examined this room. All round the doorway were scores of bullet holes, some with bullets still sticking in them. The roof and part of the side wall had fallen in and lay in a heap on the floor. Removing some of this heap I came upon a human hand, and then upon a half bare skull, attached to which was a coil of long black hair—the uncut hair of a Sikh.

Small wonder that the hearts of our people, English and Indian, were hot

¹ Lieutenant Hamilton of the Guides, commanding the escort.

against the Afghans and their ruler.

The next day there was a startling incident. To quote my diary—

"I had arranged to go down to the Residency at 2 and sketch. At 16 minutes past one there was a report in camp as if the signal gun had gone. I stepped out of my tent to find out what had happened, and saw an immense column of dense brown smoke rising many hundred feet into the air above the Bala Hissar. From its base volumes of a still denser colour were rolling out horizontally over the city. It was obvious that a big magazine had gone—and as the place was known to be full of powder and ordnance stores and small-arms ammunition, it seemed probable that the damage done to the Citadel and town would be tremendous. . . . From the time of the first explosion the rattle of rifle cartridges, shells, small quantities of powder, and other stores, was incessant. It sounded like a very severe general action. In the afternoon I went out to try for a sketch. I was just finishing the eastern line of rampart when a second and still more violent explosion took place, and half the line disappeared before my eyes. . . . I caught the shape of the smoke column as rapidly as I could, and have a very accurate pencil sketch of the actual explosion. . . . From this time—4 o'clock—the discharges of small-arms ammunition and other com-

bustibles went on more merrily than ever. Great stretches of rampart were down, and the gateway blocked."

I have the sketch still. It was perhaps fortunate for me that I was not in the Residency when the explosion occurred, for when I went there later I found it had "covered the Residency with bullets and stones," and done some damage.

My diary goes on: "This business has determined the General on totally destroying the Bala Hissar, and moving the force for the winter into the Sherpur cantonment under the Bemaru heights. He fears the Lower Bala Hissar may have underground stores of powder. We shall thus be near the site of our old cantonment of 1842. *Absit omen*. The cantonment is strongly fortified this time, and may, according to the General, be made unapproachable. There is cover for us all, he says, and good water."

This scheme was in fact carried out a few weeks later, but, as Lord Roberts has explained in his book, the change of plan was due not so much to the explosion as to the fact that the continued occupation of the Bala Hissar entailed a separation of our little Force into two detached portions. The disasters of the first Afghan War afforded a warning of the danger of such a step, and the sequel proved that the General was wise in keeping his troops together. This sequel I must leave for another chapter.

THE SCENE OF WAR.—VII.

FRANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

“The sea of civilisation and all history.”

To go from the North of France on a late day of November, with the early snow lying thin upon the fields, and the long roads where the traffic of War rolls endlessly upon its course, churning the mud; to pass from the grey skies weeping with rain and the winter-chill, into the South, where the Mediterranean suns herself under the Maritime Alps, is to change one's soul. It is another world; and the poet who said this thing could not be done was wrong. Insensibly one's spirit takes on a new complexion, and Life and Death rise up before one envisaged in other forms. The stern purpose of War, its unbending rigour, and implacable devotion to one single end, relax their grip. There is space here in the sunlight for softer things. If you could move the whole line of the contending armies for but one winter day from the northern trenches, into this blue and gold country by the sea, Capua would have its way, and the War would surely end. At least the reflection that it might, showed me how much my own spirit had changed in the transit. There was another transition too. East and West, we are told, can never meet. But, indeed, they are meeting all the time. Where, I wonder,

does the one end and the other begin? The bright warm sunlight in the Cannebière, the autumn gold that still lingered in the trees,—bare skeletons up there in the North,—the palm-trees and the cypresses, the splashes of bright colour in the streets: these were enough to tell one that the East was near at hand. Facing me at the Station Restaurant, as I took my morning coffee, there sat a little man, with the band of a munition worker on his arm, bright-eyed, with small hands and feet, supple, olive-skinned, intelligent: the Oriental. You may be sure that if you had seen him as an infant, clotheless, happy in the dust of some Eastern byway, you would never have labelled him French. He was neither Jew nor Arab, but just a little man of the South. More obvious were the dark-skinned folk, whom France has summoned across the waters to her standards. Here were the Arab of princely mien, his desert *burnous* flowing about him, the Turco, the Spahi, the jet-black nigger from Senegal; and colour was with all these people, and the East in their poise. The nigger is so frankly of Africa that you hesitate a moment at the thought of him in this war, in which the best blood of the world is en-

gaged. But then you harden your heart. If the brute-force of Prussia is to govern the ideals of men, the nigger from Senegal is more than justified.

From Marseilles I went to Toulon, to the headquarters of the French Fleet. The Mediterranean rolled lazily at the foot of the mountains; the vineyards lay like a crimson carpet upon the lower hills; the olive groves were grey in the wind; and upon the green meadows the shepherds grazed their flocks of slowly wandering sheep, as if 'twere still midsummer. Death is not so bad when Nature is harsh and overbearing; but it must be hard for one born to these things to willingly surrender any fraction of his life before the appointed hour. . . .

Flowers abound even at this late hour of the year; and the "*beaux palmiers*," the "*vues très belles sur la mer*," and the other distracting joys to which the little guide-books of the coast draw attention, are much in evidence. But even here there is a whisper of graver things. "*On y cultive*," say the books, "*la fleur d'immortelle dont on fabrique des couronnes*." There is need for such in France to-day.

It was twenty years since I had seen anything of the French Fleet. Twenty years ago, from my father's house in a western seaport of France, I had become familiar with its coming and going. I had, like others, visited the Admiral's flagship, met some of the younger officers, shared in their hospitalities. In the cold

spring days I had seen the fishermen of the coast—the *Pêcheurs d'Islande*, the backbone of the Navy—assembling for the voyage to the Newfoundland Banks, singing their endless ditties—

*Femmes pour être heureuses
Épouser des marins,
Jamais d'humeurs fâcheuses,
Jamais des noirs chagrins.*

I had seen them sail away with ritual and ceremony into the grey wastes of the Atlantic on this voyage, from which there were always some who never returned; and I had come to know some of them very well in the course of my own little voyages about that iron coast. There was Eugène Bézard, who helped with the boat, ever bragging of his skill as a sailor; and Marie Rose, his wife, who frowned upon her man's vain-gloriousness; and Pierre and Henri, their sons, both of whom were drowned in after years at Miquelon. But why should I dwell upon these personal memories, except that they belong to the category of days spent in France—some of the happiest days of one's life. . . .

At Toulon I found the Vice-Admiral at work in a quiet room skied away under the roof of the Préfecture Maritime. It is an old place this, stamped with Heaven knows what memories of the past of France. The present building, "preceded by a garden of beautiful palm-trees," dates to the year 1786. Much has happened to France since then.

Outside the Admiral's room, after I had passed the shrewd mariners in the vestibule, I found a naval officer at a little table, with the gold aiguillettes of an aide-de-camp upon his breast, and within, in the dimly-lighted room, the Admiral himself. No sea-dog this with hard, fighting jaw; but a man with a gentle and rather fragile air, such as Nelson might have worn had one found him seated beside a table.

The Admiral has played his part. On the 2nd of August 1914, when the succour of the British Fleet was yet uncertain, he moved out with his small array of six old cruisers—for the strength of France had been concentrated in the Mediterranean—to close the Channel to the Boche. It was a brave adventure that happily did not mature. And now he sits here as Prefect Maritime, Governor of Toulon, Commander-in-Chief, and I know not what other titles, that linger about his office from the days of Louis Quatorze. Upon the great coloured map on the wall, with its wide spaces of blue sea, its fringe of shore—so different to the staff maps of the land-fighters—there are pinned the movable labels that mark the voyages of the French Fleet. The enemy would give a good deal to penetrate into this innermost sanctuary.

In France it is the Army that has always counted for most in the affections of her people; but the French are

proud of their seamen—the little blue-eyed Bretons of the West, the yellow-haired Flemings of the North, the Latins of the South; of their dead admirals, whose names still live in the nomenclature of their ships; of the gallant and chivalrous record of their people upon the seas.

They know that in this vast War the Fleet of France must of necessity play a minor part, but they are glad to think that it has been an honourable and an effective one. It is possible that we, who own the greatest Fleet in the world, do not realise how much our friends have done. Long before the War they released the British Fleet for service in the North Seas and made possible that ascendancy which from the first day of the conflict has controlled the destinies of the German Fleet and the ultimate issue of the War. In the Mediterranean they have played a capital part. During the long months that preceded the entry of Italy into the War, they sealed the Gulf of Otranto to the Austrian Fleet. It was no sinecure this. Up and down they went, night and day, ceaselessly vigilant, straining for the fight that never came their way, patient, obstinate, enduring. For the gallant French spirit, imaginative, sensitive to the impressions of the hour, borne down by the griefs of their invaded land, eager to attack, fretting for glory and honour, those long months were a period of travail nobly borne. Far from France, from any

base of their own, exposed to the insidious attack of the submarine, the mine, and the torpedo, their task was necessarily one of peril as well as of endurance. The *Léon Gambetta*, struck by a torpedo at midnight in the light of a pale moon, went down with all but 137 of her crew. The Vice-Admiral and all her officers, without a single exception, were lost. Some of the letters of those brave men have been published. It was no unlooked-for death that overtook them. "One day," wrote a young officer, the son of an Admiral of France, "they will probably get us. But we have all offered up our lives to our country in advance, and are no more troubled. I only pray God not that he will spare me, but that He will sustain me in the moment of battle and in the hour of death."

"Always *en l'air*, never at rest," wrote the Admiral; "we have an ungrateful task that never comes to a head, and is profoundly monotonous. Never even to see one's enemy when one is at war, that is too cruel a trial. So it is that, in spite of all the physical and moral suffering we endured there, my thoughts go back to those days at Tuyen-Quan when I was in command of the little gunboat *Mitrailleuse*, when the shells and bullets sang night and day in my ears, and I asked myself if on the morrow the Chinese would not get hold of me and saw

off my neck. There one was filled with a sort of intoxication at feeling oneself alive in the midst of that hell, whereas here——!"

But the Admiral who wrote these words had fought his last fight, and the ungrateful seas were to close over him in silence.

The share of France in our own tragic failures at the Dardanelles is more widely known. We remember how the *Gaulois* and the *Suffren*¹ brought their guns to bear upon the Turkish fortresses, how the *Bouvet* went down in something less than a minute after taking a gallant part in the attack on The Narrows. Of the very few who survived her loss there was one whose company made pleasant my stay at Toulon, Lieutenant de Vaisseau Q——, an aide-de-camp of the Admiral, who was picked up, smiling, out of the water. He retains that cheery smile.

And since then the French have taken their share in guarding the waters of the Mediterranean, in fighting the submarine, conveying the expeditionary force to Salonica and their own colonial troops to France, upholding the Allied cause in Greece, refitting the Servian Army; in this, as in all things, heart and soul with us in the common cause; good neighbours and chivalrous and gallant friends.

The morning after my visit to the Préfecture Maritime, De V—— came over to my hotel,

¹ Both these ships have since been lost.

and said the Admiral wished me to be taken up to the fortifications on Mount Faron, that overlook the harbour at an altitude of 1500 feet. It was difficult to believe, as we made our way across the palm-fringed Square, that this was the end of November. The sun shone as upon a summer day in England, but the quality of his light was such as has never penetrated to our islands. The fresh morning air, the landscape of increasing beauty, the warmth of the sunlight—these, as the motor carried us ever higher towards the summit, filled my spirit with the wine of life. I reproached myself for being here, remembering the mud of the Argonne, the trenches on the Somme, the grief and the pain and the desolate wastes of war. It was as though one had passed from the brink of the nethermost pit to the summit of the mountain, at whose feet there spread the tempting world. The joy of life, the pleasure of the sun, the beauty of the earth—all these must a man be willing to give up if he is to save his own soul.

It was, moreover, as though one had dropped four centuries of time. This old fortress of the Croix de Faron, with its coat of arms upon the gate, that dominates the surrounding world, was designed by Vauban in the days of Louis Quatorze. It bears upon it the impress—the pride and the beauty—of those bygone days. *Le Roi Soleil* might have stood here and looked

with complacence upon the kingdom at his feet. Below it, half-way down the mountain, there is another fortress, with high walls rising from its moat, like the Bastille, and the grand air of a castle; and between them there are covered ways and gun emplacements of the sort that Vauban loved. You can never mistake his hand.

There is still a garrison within the walls, and since the natural site retains its potentiality for war, the road to it is closed to the curious—a military road. But in truth it is a thing too beautiful for modern war. A pair of young lovers might wander here absorbed in the mystery of Happiness. Upon the farther side, whence the snows of Corsica across the sea, the nearer Alps, are visible, the foundations of this eyrie drop, like the stronghold of some Rajput chief or medieval baron, twelve hundred feet to the green valley spaces patterned with olive-groves and hamlets; and a man of that age might well as he stood here have believed himself exempt from all possibilities of disaster. But no one thinks of these things now; the six-foot trench is become a far more formidable bulwark. I shall reveal no secret if I say that the best of the guns of Faron have been sent away to other places than this.

Yet it might have been otherwise. Had Italy gone in with the Central Powers, Toulon would have become, as of old, a place of capital

importance, and these brave old forts and harbours might have awakened, like Troy and Abydos, to the stir of mighty war. To destroy and to take Toulon would have been a feat of arms worth accomplishing.

"Those were anxious days for us," said De V——, "when Italy was yet uncertain. Her neutrality first, and then her alliance, were of the greatest value to us. We cannot forget our debt to Italy."

As I stood here upon the edge of this fortress, looking down upon sea and plain in a mist of sunlight, I felt dimly conscious of hidden things. Behind the creed of power, the dominion of force, the tramp of armies, and the sound of guns; behind all the bestial forces of a materialism that has numbed the imaginations of men, I could hear as afar off the rhythmic beating of the world's heart, the moving of those spiritual tides that in their ebb and flow are slowly lifting up humanity and carrying it on its difficult road towards perfection. No! I said. We are not going back to Thor and Woden, and the brute is not going to win.

The Isles of Hyères, the alluvial plains, the sheltered harbours of Toulon, the ships, the woods, the mountains, and the sea—all that goes to the miracle of a Mediterranean landscape, its beauty, the imprint upon it of numberless centuries of men, lay spread beneath my vision. I, for one, could not doubt the ultimate end.

We descended to the plain, and passing through the gorges

of Ollioules which the Revolutionary armies forced in the course of their siege of Toulon a hundred and twenty-three years ago, we came into a little valley watered by a stream, and crimson from end to end with the falling leaves of Cherry Orchards—the Vallée des Cerisiers they call it. The patient toil, the intelligence, the infinite love and care of the French peasant for his fields, were visibly written here. The ordered life was pursuing its course, the women and the children taking the place of those who were gone up to the battle. We stopped in a village to which the people of Toulon come picnicking on Sundays, at the door of an old inn that might have been here in the days of Henri Quatre. Over a side door in the high granite wall there was an inscription that caught my eye: "*Grande Reserve des écrevisses*" it said.

"My little son," said De V——, a little shy of such domesticities under his gold aiguillettes, "asked me to be sure and get him some *écrevisses*. If—you wouldn't mind?"

So we knocked at the door of the inn, and the innkeeper's wife came to us on the threshold, weighty and competent, but sombre and devoid of joy. She brightened at seeing De V——.

"Ah," she said. "You are Monsieur De V——. You are always welcome here."

He laughed and cheered her with old memories.

"Do you not remember," he said, "when I was a boy and

you were a girl, and I used to come for *écrevisses* to your father's door? Well, I have come now—for my son."

"Ah," she said sadly, "those were other days, Monsieur De V——, other days—happy days,—it is not so now," and her voice broke as it fell to something like a whisper; "this war—there are two of mine up there, all I have. But oh! they will never come back to me. No; I know it, I know it. No one ever comes back from there!" And then, looking sadly upon the ground and wiping her eyes with the corner of her vast apron, she said—

"*Mais, c'est pour la patrie,*" which gave her courage. "Come, Monsieur," she said, "we will see about the *écre-*

visses. We have not so many now, and the price you know has doubled since the War;" with which she faced him with the firm glance of the French woman of business. De V—— only laughed as he pulled out his purse.

In the Cherry Orchard, under an old grey wall, where a stream ran through cool and shady places, the *écrevisses* were taken from under their potsherds—dismayed at this descent of Fate—and carried off in her apron to the weighing scales, of Gargantuan size, a hundred years old, and there weighed up with scrupulous care and billed for after a patient calculation, for they were a fraction over the kilo.

It is from such homes that France derives her sustenance.

MUNITIONS.

It was another scene that I looked upon in the old Arsenal of Toulon, whose great gateway stands here by the busy street where the trams go by, a remnant of days that have long since gone.

Designed by Vauban, when the fourteenth Louis was king, it fronts the world with something of the pride of that stately period. To enter this guarded place in time of war is no small privilege. Even in times of peace it is almost inaccessible to a stranger.

"*Faire la demande,*" say the regulations, "*à 2 heures après-midi, exactement, et justifier de son identité et de sa qualité de Français. Le Ministre seul*

peut donner l'autorisation aux étrangers."

But I was carried through it, without a murmur from the sentry at the gate, past old-world squares and ancient buildings, upon which there still lay the impress of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, into yards and factories, where men and women by the thousand were at work upon the most modern instruments of Death. "Munitions" we call these things, and having said the word pass on, little realising what it means. What it means is that the Big Blonde Brute has turned the greater part of the civilised world into a factory of De-

struction. He has taught us, who were slow to learn this lesson, that it is not safe to live with a hyæna at your doors, and until the brute is slain, or his instincts changed, the world that we had fashioned cannot again be a homely decent place in which to live. It is in factories such as this that we are slowly forging the instruments of his conversion. But what a task!

Here are incredible numbers of the biggest shells, each one of which weighs 900 kilos, and stands almost as high as a man. The purpose of this formidable engine is not merely to kill, but to penetrate. It is designed in a special way to fulfil that purpose. The fuse that explodes the 75 at the instant of contact is here put far away in the rear of the shell, and its steel nose is fined to a point and made of extraordinary strength, so as to go *through* an obstacle, such as plate armour or cement, before it explodes. This vast missile is filled with melinite. You see the toilers at work, stirring up the explosive like treacle in a great cauldron, heating it to a high pitch of temperature, and then pouring it into the upturned hollow of the shell. When the treacle cools it contracts and hardens into rock, and then a little more is added to fill the remaining space. A hole is drilled into the finished mass at its base, and into this there is inserted an explosive yet more violent and quicker in its rage than even the deadly melinite; and then

comes the fuse that is to set the whole sinister thing aflame. These vast cases of steel have already come a long journey before the explosive is added that gives them life. I must not say what each of them costs; but it is enough to keep a whole family of humble people for a year. As to the melinite, it lies upon the face of everything that comes within its circuit. The ground is yellow with it; the hands and the clothes of the workmen take its colour; the white factory horse is tricked out with it like the processional steed of an Indian Prince. For some hours after I came away it stained my fingers. Men who came within reach of a bursting shell are turned yellow by it in the hour of death.

At the other end of the scale, through many gradations of calibre, there is the shell of the 75, slim and golden, beautiful as a girl in her prime. Here is the brass tube which holds the powder, and beside it the actual missile. Powder—the word suggests to one's medieval mind a fine black substance in a little pile; but here it is a bundle of flexible strips of chocolate tied together with a bit of string, and two of these bundles go into each tube.

The shell itself is an amazing piece of mechanism. The fuse consists of no less than nineteen separate parts, each of which has a special function of its own; and it is only when all these parts co-ordinate that the Creature lives

and moves. Some of these parts are so minute that they look like the tiny links in a lady's chain; but if you look closely into one of these you will see that in each of them two microscopic holes have been drilled for the silk-like thread of explosive. Each one of these parts has to be carefully made, carefully adjusted, firmly and exactly fixed in its place, if the shell is to fulfil its purpose of death. The work is so precious that it approaches the refinement of the goldsmith's trade.

Each of these elegant shells when it is finished has cost the taxpayer forty francs; the speed at which they can be fired is something incredible, surpassing that of any other gun of the like kind in the world; and the quantities that are fired in the course of a big battle run into wonderful figures. I have seen the empty cases, lying in vast piles and little mountain heaps upon the battlefield, being carried away in trucks and waggons, in a seemingly endless procession, across the fields of France; and then when they are all gathered together, they are brought here to be washed and cleansed, to be burnished and coaxed into their original forms, to be filled once more with death. Each time they return a little mark is made on them, and I have counted as many as five of these little symbols engraved upon the brass.

As I looked at them here going through this process of renovation, it was with a strange emotion that I realised

that men have come to be regarded in the same light. Like these empty cases, they are carried back sick, wounded, shaken, to be repaired, refitted, refilled with a missile energy, before they are sent once more to the battle-front. Man, the individual, the complex, the finished creature, the heir of all the ages, the ultimate fruit of time, has come to be reckoned in these last days as little better than a cartridge. That is what the Brute has brought us to in this year of grace. They call it manpower, but in truth it is the destruction of the best and bravest of the world.

It will be strange indeed if there is not a violent reaction—the most violent in the history of man—against this astounding heresy when the War is over.

Every night from these factories a train leaves the blue edge of this old-world sea, here by Toulon Arsenal, laden with the produce of this people's toil, the hard, unwearying, patient toil of France. It goes somewhere—to the Front. Every little piece of separate mechanism, every touch of each woman's hand, has its ultimate purpose and destiny of destruction. The dread sequence is complete.

As to machinery, organisation, material, a certain weariness overtakes the spirit as one observes these things. One is invited to admire them, to be struck with their amazing skill and mechanical prevision, as something superhuman and beyond the ordinary compass

of men. But this is an illusion. There is nothing wonderful in machinery except its invention. For the rest, it is a pedestrian thing, like a bureaucracy or a Government department. A poem or a picture that can live is a miracle beside such things.

More impressive, more wonderful than all these things in this vast workshop of destruction, was the quiet room in which the babies of the factory workers are cared for. I suppose that in the secret heart of each woman, as she fills the shells with destruction for the enemy, there is the knowledge that she has laboured more truly for her country, for humanity, by passing on to another her torch of life.

The State cares for these children, and does for them all that is necessary, at least while the mothers are at work. I confess that I was unprepared for this spectacle. The building in which they were housed was like any other in which the shells were being made. There was no hint of what lay behind that closed door. But very different was it within. It was with a feeling of something like amazement that I entered it—my ears still deafened by the grinding of the wheels, the fall of iron upon iron; my eyes dazed by the flame of the furnaces and the circling of the endless bands. It was so quiet here, and white; each child in its cradle, a mysterious being with the hint of immortality in its eyes. A

capable woman went to and fro amidst the white curtains, looking to the needs of the inmates. By some miracle they were all very quiet and good. War babies, it seems, are like that. *Enfants de la patrie*.

And then there was another thing. The workshop superintendent who had shown me over the factory was a man of the type developed by engines. Think of some lean engineer in a ship's company, one of those hard-bitten, quiet men, who seem to live aloof from the other officers and take no part in the lighter joys of a voyage; a stiff, competent, unbending sort of democrat. Such was this man. There was no fraction of his machinery with which he was not familiar; no question you could ask him, whether of principle or detail, to which he could not instantly reply. But withal you would say he was a man uninteresting, except in the matter of his machines. When at last he had taken me everywhere and showed me all that was to be seen, he came to a stand in the yellow melinite slush of the yard. "I would ask you," he said, "before you go, to look at Mont Faron. We have a view of it from here that is unequalled anywhere on the coast; and that tint of rose that you see on it at this hour is of a colour unsurpassed in the world."

I could believe that what he said was true. The whole mass of the great mountain

that impends above Toulon was seized with a divine radiance, and was aglow with a flame that might have been reflected upon it through some jewel in Space. If you know these Mediterranean hills, if you have seen them change from yellow in the sun's glare to exquisite rose at evening, to violet, to the grey of mysteries of night, you will gather some impression from these words of the beauty to which my attention was thus drawn.

But if you could have looked at the long-nosed face of this maker of implements of war, touched with the emotion of the scene, and rapt in the beauty of this, his own corner of the earth, you might have understood something of the fire that burns in French hearts when they speak of "La Patrie." It is always there that sacred flame, and only the fool Boche would have thought of trying to put it out.

THE JURIEŒN DE LA GRAVIÈRE.

From Toulon my fortunes carried me across the Mediterranean in the French cruiser of this name. It was a singular privilege, and one that I am not likely to forget. The evening previous to our departure I had seen the grey ship lying at anchor in the Petite Rade, her guns slumbering at her sides—an instrument of war, asleep. In the harbour there was a Zeppelin taken from the Boche; a Dreadnought in dock, like some majestic castle of iron, with guns upon guns in her turrets and casemates, upon which the workers were busy to the sound of clanging iron, refitting her for battle; vast buildings and workshops, the *grands bâtiments de la marine de guerre* that make Toulon so vital a place to the French in the Mediterranean. Against the walls of the Darse Vauban the submarines basking like lizards in the sun. It is an odd world down there in the bowels of

the submarine, with its network of intricate tubes, its compressed air, its electric batteries, the periscope in which you can see reflected the outer world going about its business, its little cabin for the two officers in command, the compass by which it steers through the blind darkness of the sea. Above the wooded slopes of the promontory of Sicie, that projects into the sea like a ram, dividing the two harbours the one from the other, I had seen the fort called after Napoleon, and the *Batterie des Hommes Sans peur*. These are names that take one back to the days—half fantastic—when the Great Captain was emerging from the obscurity of his youth into the flame of history. The Revolutionary armies were besieging Toulon, the British Fleet was at anchor in these very waters, when Napoleon came upon the scene. His quick eye seized the importance of this promontory—

our people had given it the name of the Little Gibraltar—the fort upon it was carried by assault, the guns of Napoleon were turned upon the harbour, and Toulon fell before his prowess. It was the beginning of his wonderful career.

There were many other things that appealed to the eye in this ancient place that has seen so much of history in the past: memories of the passing of Rome, of the Barbarian hordes, of the rush of the Mussulman invasions; of the late glories of Charles V. and Henri Quatre and Louis the Fourteenth; of the ebb and flow of fortune over a thousand years that still leave France in her seat of honour and fame throughout the world, with the added lustre of these two years.

The morning found me by the Darse Vieille, the old floating dock of Henri Quatre, the sea a-shimmer in the sun; and as I stepped into the motor launch that had been sent off for me, the petty officer, with a grave courtesy, asked me whither I desired him to proceed. "To the *Jurien de la Gravière*," I said. He knew, of course; but in France there are old traditions. When we came alongside, he stood there at the salute with the satin water swaying about him, till I had reached the top of the companion, where I found another like himself; and when I entered into the solemn interior of the ship it was to find the Commander waiting there, with his principal officer, to give me a welcome. I was the

guest, you see, of France; and to be a guest of France is to find yourself, however undeserving, clothed in a robe of honour.

As I passed into the Commander's quarters, I noticed in the companion-way that leads to the quarter-deck a coat of arms emblazoned on the walls, with the coronet of a nobleman, and his motto "Integer Vital." One does not look for such things in Republican France; but the Navy is old and maintains her traditions. Generation after generation the same families enter the service of the sea, and many of the officers one meets are the sons and the grandsons of admirals. Of these *Juriens de la Gravière*, two were Admirals of France, and one a peer, who was also a member of the Academy—a man of letters, and the author of '*Guerres Maritimes*.' Their portraits hang from the wall of the Commander's saloon, and as we stood before these, he spoke with some feeling of the exquisite urbanity and distinction of mind that characterised the greater of these two men, after whom his ship was named. Thus, though long since dead, these memories of the departed survive, touching with their line of gold the duller fabric of our times.

The Commander himself—and if these lines should ever come to his notice, he will, I hope, forgive me for so personal a note—was a man worthy of such ancestry. I had noticed him before we met at my hotel at Toulon,

with his wife and his son of twelve—the man grave and dark-haired, singularly resembling in the firm dignity of his features a late Viceroy of India—his wife, fair as an Englishwoman—their boy, a smiling lad, who might have come from a public school; and I had read their little history. At Toulon, whence the ships go to their destiny upon the troubled seas, you will notice many such gatherings of farewell—the simple women of the sailors, with the tears filling eyes that would yet be brave for their country—the officers' wives with the proud smile that so often covers a gentlewoman's aching heart,—many such episodes, running like an undertone through the southern exuberance and sunshine of this meridional port.

We spent many hours together in the privacy of his saloon over charts and maps, speaking of the War and its incidents; upon the bridge by the conning tower; and at meals, when leaving his grave functions on the Commander's deck, he would come down to entertain his guest. I cannot repeat here all that he told me; but his company and his fellowship, his ungrudging kindness and frank acceptance of one who was but a little while before a stranger, warmed my heart towards him and his country. There seemed to me the widest gulf between men such as these, and the scoundrels who are set to sink without warning

ships carrying women and children, and even the sick and wounded. It seemed to me that men of the type of this Commander, and the grave admirals upon the wall, would refuse, upon whatever pretext, to be drawn into such misdoings. I cannot imagine Englishmen, Americans, doing such things.

We lay at anchor for a while in Toulon harbour, while the gulls fluttered over the sombre remnants of a battleship, and the boats came swaying over the water with their burden of fresh-eyed men. By the time they had all come on board, the ship was crowded with them, as with a great company. The water lay still and silent below us, and as I looked over the cruiser's side, I could see there the blades of the side-propellers, like the fins of a great shark, flapping and bending as if alive. It was only an illusion of light, for the propeller was still at peace. Then of a sudden the blades began to revolve, and once more were still. A bubble rose upon the silken surface of the sea. But when the last man was aboard, and a signal was given from the shore, we moved in earnest. The blades of the great screws swung swiftly round and were veiled under the swirl of waters, and the *Jurien de la Gravière* was launched upon her course.

That first day of her voyage is indelibly fixed upon the tablets of my mind. I know

not what of perfection there was in it, but if life had many such days no one would ever wish to go to Paradise. It was a day late in November, the Mediterranean was like a thing alive and conscious of its beauty, the air pulsed with golden memories of all the wonders that this storied water has seen. I have felt this sensation before in this clear clairvoyant air. I have asked myself upon such occasions whether any one ever dies; whether it is not true that the souls of all the departed linger and live on about one; whether it is not only our momentary passage through the flesh that draws a curtain about us, veiling the perpetual life. Certain it is that at such times and upon such a sea one is in communion with all that has been in the mighty past. What in this long sequence is the present War? Its incidents fade and are forgotten in that vast company.

As we bore upon our way the flushed snows of the Maritime Alps rose up in a great wall from the fringes of the sea. "Never," said the Commander with a sort of homage in his air, "have I seen them so bright and clear." Upon the blue surface that swayed about us like a vast sapphire inspired with life numberless white sails gleamed in the constant sun. The sky was unflecked with even a wisp of cloud. The islands of the coast rose up like the siren-haunts of another age.

Here and there afar off there glinted the white walls of towns and villages—the St Raphael, Hyères. . . .

The ship added to these things. The great French windows of the Commander's saloon framed and displayed their beauty. It was a drawing-room upon the sea. Across the port-hole by my cabin the long dark muzzle of a gun was drawn like a sword across the landscape. Upon the roof the stern gun pointed hungrily out to sea, a man ever beside her, restless of eye and keen of vision. Her provender was laid in a pile beside her. Upon the bridge there stood the trumpeter, a man with a long dark beard and the far-off mystery of the Celt in his eyes. Generations upon generations ago his people came to the wild Breton coast, driven eastward this time by the Anglo-Saxon horde. Inside the conning tower, in its circle of steel, a couple of men stood over a compass, like priests about a ritual. Outside upon the narrow bridge the Commander's fine face looked forward across the sea, its note of urbanity veiled under the shadows of command. All that was in the ship was his, his will alone predominant. If trouble came he would be the last to leave her. Below him in her armoured casemate lay the forward gun, the vanguard of the ship. To starboard and to larboard a gunner stood by each quick-firing Hotchkiss, and in the open breach there

lay a cartridge ready for instant use. It was a scene of profound tranquillity: the warm sunshine, the Elysian air, the stately progress of the ship, spoke only of a static peace. But under this surface there flowed, as it were in secret, a stream of vigilant attention, of potential wrath. There was ease here, but it was a feline ease, as of a great cat half-slumbering, yet awake to the rippling surface of his skin and the slight twitching of his lidded eyes.

I suppose that all battleships are like this.

Another thing that seized me by its contrast was the fact that, though alone at sea, we were yet in intimate contact with the world. Upon the table at breakfast I found a typed *communiqué* relating the German version of the day's war. And from time to time I learnt something of the invisible messages that warn and guide a ship-of-war. "There is a submarine lying up for us near the north of Corsica," said the Commander with a cheerful indifference; and then again, "We have one following close in our wake, but I take no account of him. Let him come on."

The next day—it was the 26th of November—we ran into violent seas; the great forward gun was hidden under a tumult of breaking waves and a part of the bridge was carried away. It was the fickle sea once more—the Mediterranean, true to her

character—"Placidi pallacia ponti." A light cruiser, swift and long and narrow as a racing skiff, is no bed of roses in rough weather.

On the 27th the sea was calmer, but the Commander's face was grave beyond his wont. "One of our passenger ships has been sunk," he said. "We cannot be of any use." But had we known it then, there was worse afoot for France; for the *Suffren*, that had so gallantly carried the flag of Admiral Guépratte at Gallipoli, went down that day with all her crew, unseen by any French eye. On that day, too, the *City of Birmingham* was torpedoed, and yet another of our ships. On the 28th, as we approached Malta, as I stood by the stern-gun looking out upon the still troubled sea, the body of a dead man went speeding by. His arms were extended upon either side, his face was hidden in the waters, part of his body was white and bare; but he wore the khaki of a British soldier. Owing to our own great speed, he swept past us as if impelled by some restless purpose of his own. But indeed he was dead, and unconscious of the world—a derelict upon the seas. We knew not his name or his fortunes; only his calling was clear, as of one who had died for his country. "Many dead men," said the Commander, quietly baring his head, "are afloat upon the sea."

MALTA.

In the sun-mist of the afternoon Malta slowly emerged into being: long and low and tawny, a small fraction of earth to have played so notable a part in the world's history. But the island lies here an outpost of Europe, facing the shores of Africa and Asia, a place of vantage since men first sailed the inland sea. It is, they tell you, the most densely populated country in the world; but this is hard to believe as you approach its nude skyline from the sea.

A battleship does not enter the port of another Power like some smack or ordinary liner. It is a ceremonial affair, this advent, full of veiled courtesies and deferences—an intricate ritual. All hands, in clean jumpers, were mustered on the decks; flags fluttered at the mastheads; the trumpeter stood, with his shining tube, beside the conning tower; the officers moved restlessly upon the bridge; the Commander looked straight before him into the dazzling glare of the sun. The pilot's tug drew up with a sudden grace, and the man himself climbed heavily up the companion-way. The *Jurien de la Gravière* moved at a solemn pace into the narrow mouth of the Grand Harbour—the bastions of St Elmo, the tall houses of Valetta upon our right; the fortress of Ricasoli, like the paw of a lion couchant, upon our left. The sound of the escaping steam by the funnel

was like the sound of an anthem as we moved. Ahead of us, in the blue waters of the harbour, lay a great company of ships: transports crowded with British soldiers, their hands and faces rosy in the declining sun, good-humour upon their countenances; a Hospital Ship, white and feminine, daintily moving slowly out to sea; a Ship of Battle, grey, and superb in her lineaments, stamped with the pride of her people—the British ensign at her prow; and behind the low outline of the island the November sun was setting in a blaze of crimson and gold. The earth moved up—wondrous and unceasing miracle; and as the fiery circle dipped beneath the horizon, a bugle rang out from the battlements, a puff of white smoke was blown from the walls of the Barracca into the clean lustre of the sky, and a sudden roar filled the harbour spaces, echoing and re-echoing from end to end of their haughty borders. The flags in the ships fluttered quietly down. Another day had closed in the history of our Race.

The *Jurien de la Gravière* was by now at anchor. A British naval officer was come on board to welcome her, and I took my leave—the Commander insisting that I should be taken ashore in his gig, manned by a dozen seamen.

By the time I was landed, night had come, and Malta, which afar off looks so bare

a habitation, was become like a city out of the Arabian Nights. The mystery of the East was abroad in its narrow and thronging streets. . . . It can never be anything else but impressive, this African island, under a jewelled sky; but the War has added to its attraction. The lights of the city burnt low and violet, the stars overhead in the narrow lanes of sky were of a brightness unparalleled in Europe; the women in their black silken hoods were veiled from the eyes of the curious, and a great tide of life flowed through the Strada Reale to Fort St Elmo; past the narrow shops, the stately buildings of the Knights of the Order, the plashing of the fountains in the dark. Over these Oriental wonders, this magic of a city of the South, there lay as insistently here as afar off up there in the North, the dread pervasive shadow of the War. There were thousands of soldiers in the streets from every part of our Empire; there were sailors and marines from France and Italy; there was a sombre feeling abroad as of a beleaguered fortress. It may have been somewhat like this in the grand days when La Vallette and his knights from all Christendom gave battle to the Turk. But Malta is not beleaguered; that is only the illusion it gives one. It is the visible symbol of our majesty at sea. It is a resting-place for our transports as they come and go, to India, to Africa, to Salonica, to France; to the very ends of the world.

When I had come away from the crowded thoroughfares, and stood alone by the walls, looking out across the vast spaces of the heaving sea, it seemed to me that I could hear in the stillness and the silence the note of that wondrous music that has gathered together for the victory of our peoples, the triumph of the standards and the ideals we cherish, all that we have to offer and give.

From Malta I continued my voyage, but as an ordinary traveller. There was a P. and O. boat in the harbour, and I was able to secure the only berth that was left. Nothing is more wonderful than the way these ships go up and down in defiance of the Boche—the Commander on the bridge, the passengers on deck, the children at play. If you look for an exhibition of British phlegm you will find it here. "The Mediterranean," I had been told at Malta, was "stiff with submarines"; but these people were as tranquil to outward seeming—there must have been many anxious hearts—as if the peace of the world had never been broken.

Upon the notice-board of the saloon I found an intimation that the second heat of the bull competition would take place the following morning, and the results of yesterday's sweep on the run were inscribed by the Honorary Secretary of the Sports Committee in a clear round hand. The Judge looked over his spectacles at me from the perusal of a novel, a lady was talking

of her life in the Soudan, the deck steward was going about with straws and lemonade, a baby was giggling on its back. There was only this of difference, that beside each one of these travellers there lay a life-belt ready for instant use.

A destroyer gave us its escort part of the way, gallantly plunging through the half-troubled sea, and hour after hour, by night or day, it rode beside us, sustaining the faint of heart. But one morning the sea was very still, its surface a shimmer of ultramarine, and the snows of Ida glowed in the dazzling sun. The destroyer had vanished, and we were alone upon the waters. It was hard to believe that any danger could touch us, so warm was the sunlight, so quiet and tranquil the scene. Yet so it is that trouble comes. People who have been through such experiences will tell you how, upon just such a morning as this, as they sat at peace, a violent explosion was heard, there was a cry from some one who was wounded—some woman or child—the ship gave a heavy list, the boats were manned, and they found themselves struggling for life in the water.

We escaped these experiences; but I shall be revealing no secrets to the enemy if I say that we met two of their submarines on this voyage. Neither attacked us, for the submarine is no gallant fighter. A passenger ship that is unarmed or unprepared is

mercilessly dealt with; but a destroyer in the offing, or a good gun pointing defiantly from the ship, is another matter. That is why we are armed,—and it is the only way.

The pretence that we are attacked because we carry a gun is the kind of pretence that prevails with none but the dishonest, and it only hardens our hearts. It is equally hypocritical to urge that in some of the ships that have been sunk there were arms, munitions, or combatants. Would the enemy at any time during this War have spared a ship of ours that carried none of these things?

At a later stage in this voyage we picked up some survivors from the *City of Birmingham*. Their ship was, as usual, sunk without warning. There were many women and children on board. Why do they travel in time of war? If you ask them, you will find that there is nearly always a valid reason. This lady is going out because her husband has been ill and should have been invalided; but he will not leave his job while the War lasts. She must go to him there and help him to see it through. This one is the wife of a man in a high place, with special claims upon him, and she must be there to help him to discharge them. This girl—she has been working as a V.A.D. in France during the past year — is going because the man she was to have married has been invalided back from

Mesopotamia; this lady with the little girl of five who sits mournfully proclaiming that all her dolls have been drowned—well, it seems her husband has been fighting out in East Africa since the War began. It is three years since they have met. He thinks he may get over to India for six weeks this winter. The Chaplain's wife has asked her to make a temporary home with them; it was hard to miss the only chance she might ever have of seeing him again.

"We were twice submerged," she says, "my little girl and I, and we were all but killed by the funnel of the ship as it broke and nearly fell upon our boat; but our worst moment was when the submarine came up to the ship as she was sinking, for we thought she meant to fire on us. You see, we were so entirely at their mercy."

That is the kind of reputation the German Navy has made for itself in the hearts of the innocent.

One day upon our voyage the ship slowed down in her course. The Commander stood

in the for'rard hatchway, beside him the surgeon, grave of mien, the stewards and quartermasters in a little company. Before them, upon the ship's edge, there lay the wide English flag, and under it the body of a child. From the Book of Common Prayer before him the Commander read those last words, of stately and measured beauty, which consign the dead to the keeping of the sea. The propeller ceased to revolve. A solemn quietness lay upon the ship. Even the sea grew still. The sun, a glorious orb, lay upon the edge of the horizon; a great host of gilded clouds moved in procession about him. A quartermaster advanced towards the flag, the small object beneath it flashed and fell into the golden avenue of waters that reached away in the ship's track to the setting sun. One more citizen of the Empire had "gone West."

Only an infant this time, saved for a few hours more of life from a torpedoed ship; but a warning to such as would make peace with the unthrashed Hun. ODYSSEUS.

(To be concluded.)

AN AIRMAN'S OUTINGS.—II.

It happened late in the afternoon, one August dog-day. No wind leavened the languid air, and hut, hangar, tent, and workshop were oppressive with a heavy heat, so that we wanted to sleep. To taxi across the grass in a chase for flying speed, to soar gently from the hot ground, and, by leaning beyond the wind-screen, to let the slipstream of displaced air play on one's face—all this was refreshing as a cold plunge after a Turkish bath. I congratulated myself that I was no longer a gunner, strenuous over interminable corrections, or tiredly alert in a close observation post.

Our party consisted of four machines, each complete with pilot, observer, and several hundred rounds of ammunition. The job was an offensive patrol—that is to say, we were to hunt trouble around a given area behind the Boche lines. A great deal of the credit for our "mastery of the air"—that glib phrase of the question-asking politician—during the Somme Push of 1916, belongs to those who organised and those who led these fighting expeditions over enemy country. Thanks to them, our aircraft were able to carry out reconnaissance, artillery observation, and photography with a minimum of interruption, while the German planes were so hard pressed to defend their place in the air that they could

seldom guide their own guns or collect useful information. To this satisfactory result must be added the irritative effect on enemy morale of the knowledge that whenever the weather was fine our machines hummed overhead, ready to molest and be molested.

Offensive patrols are well worth while, but for the comfort of the airmen directly concerned they are rather too exciting. When friends are below during an air duel the pilot is warmly conscious that should he or his machine be crippled he can break away and land, and there's an end of it. But if a pilot be wounded in a scrap far away from home, before he can land he must fly for many miles, under shell fire and probably pursued by enemy hawks. He must conquer the blighting faintness which accompanies loss of blood, keep clear-headed enough to deal instantaneously with adverse emergency, and make an unwilling brain command unwilling hands and feet to control a delicate apparatus. Worst of all, if his engine be put out of action at a spot beyond gliding distance of the lines, there is nothing for it but to descend and tamely surrender. And always he is within reach of that vindictive exponent of frightfulness, Archibald the Ever-Ready.

As we climbed to 6000 feet the machines above threw

glints of sunlight 'on the screen of blue infinity. We ranged ourselves and departed. Passing the red roofs and heart-shaped citadel of Doullens and a jagged wood suggestive of a lion rampant, we followed the straight road to Arras. Arrived there, the leader turned south, for we were not yet high enough. As we moved along the brown band of shell-pocked desolation we continued to climb. Patches of smoke from the guns hovered over the ground at intervals. A score of lazy-looking kite balloons hung motionless.

By the time we reached Albert our height was 12,000 feet, and we steered eastward over the ground gained in the July advance. Beyond the scrap-heap that was once Pozières two enormous mine craters were dented into the razed surface, one on either side of the Albert-Bapaume road. Flying very low a few buses were working on trench reconnaissance. The sunshine rebounded from the top of their wings, and against the discoloured earth they looked like fireflies. A mile or so behind the then front lines were the twin villages of Courcellette and Martinpuich, divided only by the road. Already they were badly battered, though, unlike Pozières, they still deserved the title of village. Le Sars, which sat astride the road, nearer Bapaume, had been set afire by our guns, and was smoking.

In those days, before the methodical advance of the British artillery had begun to worry the stronghold overmuch, Bapaume was a hot-bed of all the anti-aircraft devilries. We therefore swerved toward the south. Archie was not to be shaken off so easily, and we began a series of erratic deviations as he ringed with black puffs first one machine, then another. The shooting was not particularly good; for although no clouds intervened between the guns and their mark, a powerful sun dazzled the gunners, who must have found difficulty in judging height and direction. From Archie's point of view, the perfect sky is one screened from the sunlight, at 20,000 to 30,000 feet, by a mantle of thin clouds against which aircraft are outlined boldly like stags on a snow-covered slope.

A few minutes in a southeasterly direction brought us to a large, ungainly wood, the shape of which was something between the ace of spades and the ace of clubs. This we knew as Mossy-Face, then growing rapidly into the headquarters of the Boche Flying Corps on the British Front. From the south-west corner Archie again scattered burst and bark at our group, but his inaccuracy made dodging hardly necessary.

A lull followed, and I twisted my neck all round the compass, for, in the presence of hostile aeroplanes, Archie only behaves when friendly ma-

chines are about. Two thousand feet below three biplanes were approaching the wood from the south. Black crosses showed up plainly on their grey-white wings. We dropped into a dive toward the strangers.

Under normal conditions a steep dive imparts a strange feeling of being hemmed in from every side. One takes a deep breath instinctively, and the novice to flying will grip the fuselage tightly with both hands, as if to avoid being crushed. And, indeed, any one in a diving aeroplane is hemmed in, by the terrific air-pressure to which the solid surface is subjected. If he attempt to stand up or lean over the side, he will be swept back, after a short struggle, beneath the shelter of wind-screen and fuselage. But when diving on a Hun, I have never experienced this troubled sensation, probably because it has been swamped under the high tension of readiness for the task. All the faculties must be concentrated on opening the attack, since an air duel is often decided in the first few seconds at close quarters. What happens during these few seconds may depend on a trifle, such as the position of the gun-mounting, an untried drum of ammunition, a slight swerve, or firing a second too soon or too late. An airman should regard his body as part of the machine when there is a prospect of a fight, and his brain, which commands the machine, must be instinctive with in-

sight into what the enemy will attempt.

As we dived, then, I estimated the angle at which we might cross the Boche trio, watched for a change of direction on their part, slewed round the gun-mounting to the most effective setting for what would probably be my arc of fire, and fingered the movable back-sight expectantly. At first the Boches held to their course as though quite unconcerned. Later, they began to lose height. Their downward line of flight became steeper and steeper, and so did ours. Just as our leading bus arrived within range and began to spit bullets through the propeller, a signal rocket streaked from the first Boche biplane, and the trio dived almost vertically, honking the while on Klaxon horns.

We were then at about 6000 feet. I was waiting to see the Huns flatten out, when—"Wouff! wouff! wouff! wouff! wouff!" said Archie. The German birds were not hawks at all; they were merely tame decoys used to entice us to a pre-arranged spot, at a height well favoured by A-A gunners. The ugly puffs encircled us, and it seemed unlikely that an aeroplane could get away without being caught in a patch of hurtling high explosive. Yet nobody was hit. The only redeeming feature of the villain Archibald is that his deeds are far less terrible than his voice. Although I was uncomfortable as we raced away, the chorused *wouffs*! reminded me of an epidemic of coughing I heard in

church one winter's Sunday, while a fatuous sermon was read by a flat-voiced vicar.

Mingled with the many black bursts were a few green ones, probably gas shells, for Archie had already taken to the gas habit. Very suddenly a line of fiery rectangles shot up and curved towards us when they had reached three-quarters of their maximum height. They rose and fell within thirty yards of our tail. These were "onions," the flaming rockets which the Boche keeps for any hostile aircraft that can be lured to a height between 4000 and 6000 feet.

I yelled to V., my pilot, that we should have to dodge. We side-slipped and swerved to the left. A minute later the stream of onions had disappeared, greatly to my relief, for the prospect of a fire in the air inspires in me a mortal funk. Soon I was to pass from the unpleasant possibility to the far more unpleasant reality.

Once outside the unhealthy region, we climbed to a less dangerous height. Again we became the target for a few dozen H.E. shells. We broke away and swooped downward. Some little distance ahead, and not far below, was a group of five Albatross two-seaters. V. pointed our machine at them, in the wake of the flight-commander's bus.

Next instant the fuselage shivered. I looked along the inside of it and found that a burning shell fragment was lodged on a longeron, half-way between my cockpit and the

tail-plane. A little flame zig-zagged over the fabric, all but died away, but, being fanned by the wind as we lost height, recovered and licked its way toward the tail. I was too far away to reach the flame with my hands, and the fire extinguisher was by the pilot's seat. I called for it into the speaking-tube. The pilot made no move. Once more I shouted. Again no answer. V.'s ear-piece had slipped from under his cap. A thrill of acute fear passed through me, and it was hard work to keep cool. I stood up, forced my arm through the rush of wind, and grabbed V.'s shoulder.

"Fuselage burning! Pass the fire extinguisher!" I yelled.

My words were drowned in the engine's roar; and the pilot, intent on getting near the Boches, thought I had asked which one we were to attack.

"Look out for those two Huns on the left," he called over his shoulder.

"Pass the fire extinguisher!"

"Get ready to shoot, blast you!"

"Fire extinguisher, you ruddy fool!"

A backward glance told me that the fire was nearing the tail-plane at the one end and my box of ammunition at the other, and was too serious for treatment by the extinguisher unless I could get it at once. Desperately I tried to force myself through the bracing struts and cross-wires behind my seat. To my surprise, my

head and shoulders and one arm got to the other side—a curious circumstance, as I have tried repeatedly to repeat this acrobatic trick on the ground and have failed every time. There I stuck, for it was impossible to wriggle farther. However, I could now reach part of the fire, and I beat at it with gloved hands. Within half a minute most of it was crushed to death. But a thin streak of flame, outside the radius of my arm, still flickered towards the tail. I tore off one of my gauntlets and swung it furiously on to the burning strip. The flame lessened, rose again when I raised the glove, but died out altogether after I had hit it twice more. The load of fear left me, and I discovered an intense discomfort, wedged in as I was between the cross-struts. Five minutes passed before I was able, with many a heave and gasp, to withdraw back to my seat.

By now we were at close grips with the enemy, and our machine and another converged on a Hun. V. was firing industriously. As we turned, he glared at me, and, knowing nothing of the fire, shouted: "Why the hell haven't you fired yet?" I caught sight of a Boche bus below us, aimed at it, and emptied a drum in short bursts. It swept away, but not before two of the German observer's bullets had plugged our petrol tank from underneath. The pressure went, and with it the petrol supply. The

needle on the rev.-counter quivered to the left as the revolutions dropped, and the engine missed on first one, then two cylinders. V. turned us round, and, with nose down, headed the machine for the trenches. Just then the engine ceased work altogether, and we began to glide down.

All this happened so quickly that I had scarcely realised our plight. Next I began to calculate our chances of reaching the lines before we would have to land. Our height was 9000 feet, and we were just over nine miles from friendly territory. Reckoning the gliding possibilities of our type of bus as a mile to a thousand feet, the odds seemed unfavourable. On the other hand, a useful wind had arisen from the east, and V., a very skilful pilot, would certainly cover all the distance that could be covered. I located our exact position and searched the map for the nearest spot in the lines. The village of Bouchavesnes was a fraction south of due west, and I remembered that the French had stormed it two days previously. From the shape of the line before this advance, there was evidently a small salient, with Bouchavesnes in the middle of the curve. I scribbled this observation on a scrap of paper, which I handed to V. with the compass direction. V. checked my statements on the map, nodded over his shoulder, and set a course for Bouchavesnes.

Could we do it? I prayed

to the gods and trusted to the pilot. Through my mind there flitted impossible plans to be tried if we landed in Boche territory. After setting fire to the machine I would attempt to hide, and then at night-time I would creep along a communication trench to the enemy front line, jump across it in a gap between the sentries, and chance getting by the barbed wire and across No Man's Land. Or I would steal to the Somme, float down-stream, and somehow or other pass the entanglements placed across the river by the enemy. *Wouff! wouff!* Archie was complicating the odds against us.

Further broodings were checked by the sudden appearance of a German scout. Taking advantage of our plight, its pilot dived steeply from a point slightly behind us. We could not afford to lose any distance by dodging, so V. did the only thing possible—he kept straight on. I raised my gun, aimed at the wicked-looking nose of the attacking craft, and met it with a barrage of bullets. These must have worried the Boche, for he swerved aside when a hundred and fifty yards distant, and did not flatten out until he was beneath the tail of our machine and safe from my fire. Afterwards he climbed away from us, turned, and dived once more. For a second time we escaped, owing either to some lucky shots from my 'gun or

to the lack of judgment by the Hun pilot. The scout pulled up and passed ahead of us. It rose and manœuvred as if to dive from the front and bar the way.

Meanwhile, four specks, approaching from the west, had grown larger and larger, until they were revealed as of the F.E. type—the British "pusher" two-seater. The Boche saw them, and hesitated as they bore down on him. Finding himself in the position of a lion attacked by hunters when about to pounce on a tethered goat, he decided not to destroy, for in so doing he would have laid himself open to destruction. When I last saw him he was racing north-east.

There was now no obstacle to the long glide. As we went lower, the torn ground showed up plainly. From 2000 feet I could almost count the shell-holes. Two battery positions came into view, and near one of them I saw tracks and could distinguish movement by a few tiny dots. It became evident that, barring accident, we should reach the French zone.

When slightly behind the trenches a confused chatter from below told us that machine-guns were trained on the machine. By way of retaliation, I leaned over and shot at what looked like an emplacement. Then came the Boche front line, ragged and unkempt. I fired along the open trench. Although far from fearless as a rule, I was not in the least afraid during

the eventful glide. My state of intense "wind up" while the fuselage was burning had apparently exhausted my stock of nervousness. I seemed detached from all idea of danger, and the desolated German trench area might have been a side-show at a fair.

We swept by No Man's Land at a height of 600 feet, crossed the French first- and second-line trenches, and, after passing a small ridge, prepared to land on an uneven plateau covered by high bracken. To avoid landing down wind and down-hill, the pilot banked to the right before he flattened out. The bus touched earth easily, ran over the bracken, and stopped two yards from a group of shell-holes. Not a wire was broken. The propeller had been scored by the bracken, but the landing was responsible for no other damage. Taking into consideration the broken ground, the short space at our disposal, and the fact that we landed cross-wind, V. had exhibited wonderful skill.

We climbed out, relieved but cantankerous. V., still ignorant of the fire, wanted to know why my gun was silent during our first fight; and I wanted to know why he hadn't shut off the engine and listened when I shouted for the fire extinguisher. Some French gunners ran to meet us. The sight that met them must have seemed novel, even to a poulu of two and a half years' understanding.

Supposing that the aero-

plane had crashed, they came to see if we were dead or injured. What they found was one almost complete aeroplane and two leather-coated figures, who cursed each other heartily as they stood side by side.

"Quels types!" said the first Frenchman to arrive.

An examination of the bus revealed a fair crop of bullet holes through the wings and elevator. A large gap in one side of the fuselage, over a longeron that was charred to powder in parts, bore witness to the fire. Petrol was dripping from the spot where the tank had been perforated. On taking a tin of chocolate from his pocket, V. found it ripped and gaping. He searched the pocket and discovered a bright bullet at the bottom. We traced the adventures of that bullet; it had grazed a strut, out right through the petrol union, and expended itself on the chocolate tin.

Soon our attention was attracted to several French machines that were passing through a barrage of Archie bursts. The bombardment of an aeroplane arouses only the sporting instinct of the average soldier. His interest, though keen, is directed towards the quality of the shooting and the distance of the shells from their target; his attitude when watching a pigeon-shoot would be much the same. But the airman has experience of what the aeroplane crews must be going through, and his thought is all for them. He knows that dull, loud cough of an

Arohie shell, the hiss of a flying fragment, the wicked black puffs that creep towards their mark and follow it, no matter where the pilot may swerve. Should a friendly machine tumble to earth after that rare occurrence, a direct hit, all the sensations of an uncontrolled nose-dive are suggested to his senses. He hears the shriek of the up-rushing air, and feels the helpless terror. It hurts him to know that he is powerless to save a friend from certain death. He cannot even withdraw his eyes from the falling craft.

From the air, nothing is more unnerving than to see another machine crumbled up by a direct hit while Arohie is firing at yourself.

"Me," said a French gunner by my side, "I prefer the artillery." With which sentiment I have often agreed when dodging Arohie, though at every other time I prefer the Flying Corps work to any other kind of fighting.

V. disappeared to 'phone the Squadron Commander, and I was left with the crippled bus and the crowd of Frenchmen. The poilus questioned me on subjects ranging from the customary length of a British officer's moustache to the possible length of the war. Yes, we had been hit in a fight with Boche aeroplanes. Yes, there had also been a slight fire on board. Yes, I had great fear at the time. Yes, I would accept a cigarette with pleasure. No, it was un-

true that England contained four million civilian *embusqués* of military age. No, the report that officers of the British Flying Corps received fifty francs a day was inaccurate, unfortunately. But no, my good-for-nothing opinion was that we should not finish the Boche within a year; and so on.

"How is it," said one man in faded uniform, "that the British always manage to keep themselves correct and shaven?"

"La barbe!" interrupted another; "the Tommies don't keep clean on the Somme. Even a war correspondent couldn't." And he began to sing:

"Si ma fi-fi-fiancée me voyait,
Elle m' dirait en me donnant cinq sous:
'Va t' faire raser!' mais moi, j' répondrais
Que moi j'ai toujours les mêmes deux joues."

V. was away for an hour and a half, and when he did return it was to announce that he had been unable to phone because the line was blocked under pressure of important operations. Deciding to report in person, we declined an offer of hospitality from the French officers, but gratefully accepted a guard for the machine, and the loan of a car.

A young lieutenant accompanied us as far as Amiens. There we stopped for supper, and were joined by some civilian friends of our French companion. The *filet de sole au vin blanc* engendered a

feeling of deep content. Now that it was over, I felt pleased with the day's excitement and the contrast it afforded. Three hours beforehand it seemed likely that the evening would see us prisoners. Yet here we were, supping in a comfortable hotel with three charming ladies and the widow Clicquot.

Arrived at the aerodrome, we visited the hut inhabited by the Squadron Commander, who wore pyjamas and a smile of welcome. We were just in time, he said, to rescue our names from the list of missing.

Our tale impressed him so much that, after making arrangements for the stranded bus to be brought back by a repair party, he remarked: "You can both have a rest to-morrow."

"Cheeriho, old night-bird," said my tent companion, and remarked in a hurt tone that we were booked for the 5 A.M. reconnaissance. But my last thought before sinking into sleep was of the blessed words: "You can have a rest to-morrow."

CONTACT.

EDINBURGH.

THE city of Edinburgh has been the subject of more description, narrative, and panegyric than perhaps any other occidental town of similar extent and population. It owes this distinction primarily to unparalleled natural advantages. That it is "beautiful for situation" can scarce be denied by the most envious of its detractors, and to call it "the joy of the whole earth" would be at the worst but a pardonable exaggeration. In ordinary times tourists were wont to rally in their thousands round the Castle and the Palace of Holyrood House, and in the summer months its streets used to swarm with the drab dust-coats, and ring with the nasal twang, of visitors from "God's own country"—angels presumably, entertained by their hosts unawares. There is no more than a hint of its peculiar beauties in the bald summary which Maitland gives of its chief topographical features:

"Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland, is pleasantly situated upon a hill in the northern part of the county of Midlothian, about two miles besouth the noble estuary of the Frith of Forth, in the fifty-fifth degree and fifty-five minutes of northern latitude; and of longitude three degrees west from London: And, at certain distances from it by the Hills of Pentland, Corstorphine, Caldton, Arthur's-seat, and Salisbury-Craigs, placed as it were by nature as so many forces against the im-

petuous blasts of violent storms of wind from the south-west, west, north-west, north-east, and south-east, which often rage to a great degree in these parts."¹

Yet he who can reconstitute the glorious scene from memory, much more he who can survey it, if he pleases, every day, knows how much these prosaic words imply, and will harbour no doubt that among the capitals of the world not even Athens nor Prague can vie with "mine own romantic town."

One of the alleged drawbacks to Edinburgh as a place of residence is indicated in the foregoing quotation—its climate. Arnot confirms what his predecessor asserts about the prevalence of high winds. The winds in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, he declares, blow "with extraordinary violence" and "incredible fury."

"Houses blown down, large trees torn up by the roots, people carried off their feet and beat down upon the pavements, are no uncommon circumstances in Edinburgh."²

Mr Stevenson has much the same tale to tell.

"Edinburgh," he writes, "pays cruelly for her high seat in one of the vilest climates under heaven. She is liable to be beaten upon by all the winds that blow, to be drenched with rain, to be buried in cold sea fogs out of the east, and powdered with snow as it comes

¹ Maitland's 'History of Edinburgh,' 1753, p. 136.

² Arnot's 'History of Edinburgh,' 1779, p. 319.

flying southward from the Highland hills. The weather is raw and boisterous in winter, shifty and ungenial in summer, and a downright meteorological purgatory in the spring."¹

But our own impression is that such valetudinary complaints must not be accepted at their face value. We question whether Edinburgh has been more frequently visited by exceptional tempests than any other given locality or town in this island, or whether the normal blast of wind is steadier there than on other portions of the East coast of Scotland. London and Oxford can be just as cold as Edinburgh in the month of April, and the East wind can blow as shrewdly and display as penetrating a quality at Torquay itself as on the southern shores of our "noble estuary."

The other great drawback to Edinburgh in the past must have been formidable indeed, if all tales are true. The city appealed no less strongly to the nose than to the eye. It is impossible to ignore the cloud of witnesses who testify to the exceeding nastiness of the Edinburgh streets and closes—a condition accounted for partly by the fact that every front door had its midden, and partly by other notorious causes which it is needless to specify. There is assuredly no *penuria testium* on the point. The Statute-book and the Acts of the Privy Council concur in proclaiming the un-

savoury truth in stentorian tones. Natives of Scotland, from Dunbar to Fergusson, harp on the same string with travellers, from Brereton to Captain Topham, from Joseph Taylor to John Wesley. "One of the dirtiest cities I have ever seen, not excepting Cologne in Germany," is the compendious verdict of the peripatetic divine. Winifred Jenkins, in her communications to Mrs Mary Jones, finds a responsive echo in Bartoline Saddletree expounding the law of *tallicidian* to the hapless Reuben Butler. The sole matter in dispute among the witnesses is as to which European city is justly entitled to the second prize in this competition of foulness. While some vote for Cologne, others plump for Madrid. But about the supremacy of Edinburgh there is complete unanimity: Edinburgh is positively *hors concours*. Sir Herbert Maxwell has excerpted some of the most pungent and high-flavoured passages from the numerous authorities on this head,² and has acted wisely in so doing, were it only by way of a chastening snub to an incorrigible "patriotic" vanity. Defoe, it is true, attempts to excuse the dirt on the score of the unique situation of the town and the density of the population, closely packed into buildings of prodigious height. He avers that "in no city in the world do so many people live in so

¹ Stevenson's 'Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes,' ed. 1889, p. 2.

² 'Edinburgh: a Historical Study.' By Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart., F.R.S., &c. Williams & Norgate, 1916. See pp. 203 *et seq.*

little room as in Edinburgh." But the apology does not carry conviction. Happily, the reproach has long since been purged away. *Servabit odorem testa diu*, but mercifully not for ever, though a vigilant observer may fancy that he can still detect one or two survivals of manners abandoned elsewhere long ago.

But if Edinburgh unrolls a panorama of attractions to the outward vision, it captivates the imagination with no less potent a spell. The historic sense corroborates the effect of the beauties of nature. Arnot, in his preface, remarks that "the affairs of a kingdom and of its capital are so closely interwoven that in a history of the latter to connect or separate with propriety their respective affairs requires nice discernment." This is especially true of Scotland and of Edinburgh, which since the fifteenth century has been the very centre of the national life. He who aspires to write the history of the city can scarce escape writing that of the nation, and most of her historians have frankly accepted the task. It may perhaps be superfluous to go back with James Grant to a point "when amid the snows of the winter of 80 A.D. Julius Agricola halted on the heights above Dalkeith."¹ The kings whose portraits, "done by masterly hands," adorn the gallery of Holyrood House are best left severely alone. But Arnot himself rightly devotes much

space to events of national as distinguished from purely local importance, though he might well have spared his readers a minute exposition of the Presbyterian system of Church government. Sir Herbert Maxwell's book, which we cordially welcome as a valuable recruit to a noteworthy *corps*, is to a great extent an epitome of Scots history, and that it is accurate and workmanlike will be readily believed. We have noted only two trifling slips. He speaks of St Giles's Kirk as a Cathedral at the end of the fourteenth century;² and he describes the venerable minister of St Cuthbert's, whose prayer "for the young man that is come among us seeking an earthly crown" is familiar to all, as "Mr M'Neil, vicar of the West Kirk."³ Mrs Oliphant's 'Royal Edinburgh,' too, is practically a history of the House of Stuart, which is as much as to say of Scotland. The intimate connection between the fate of that ill-starred line of kings and the fate of their subjects has been brought out by her with a characteristic intermixture of delicacy and force. Few will be disposed to deny the virtues of eloquence and pathos to the passage in which she sums up the relations between the Stuarts and the capital:

"Edinburgh grew under their sway from an angry village lying between a fierce castle and a rich monastery, little distinguished above

¹ 'Old and New Edinburgh,' 1887, p. 1.

² P. 44.

³ P. 197.

its peers, less favoured than Stirling, less wealthy than the town of St John, to one of the most noted of cities, picturesque and splendid, full of noble houses, the centre of national life and government. And it is curious to record that no one of the monarchs who brought it such nobility and fame left any sadness of death to the associations of Edinburgh. They lived and were wedded and filled with the brightness of their happier moments the town which afforded so beautiful a scene for all rejoicings: they died on the battlefield or in other places in conflict or violence or despair. But Edinburgh only retains the brighter memories, the triumphant processions, the bridal finery, the jousts and the feasts, the Parliaments and proclamations of laws and high alliances. The reigns of the Jameses contain the history of her rise, her splendours, her climax of beauty and stateliness, without any association of downfall or decay."¹

The earliest historian of Edinburgh, for our purposes, was William Maitland, who, born at Brechin in 1693, carried on the rather gruesome business of a "hair merchant," and died in 1757, a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Society of Antiquaries. He seems at one time to have seriously projected an undertaking similar in character to the "Statistical Account of Scotland," which Sir John Sinclair carried through half a century later. But the scheme miscarried, owing to the failure of the parish ministers to respond to his requests for information: the ministers of the eighteenth century not being broken in to filling up schedules of interrogatories like their suc-

cessors of to-day. Maitland accordingly is remembered, in so far as he can be said to be remembered at all, by his *Histories of London and Edinburgh*. To be quite candid, neither is by any means a work of the first order. He has no claim to be ranked alongside of giants such as Thomas Madox or John Reeves. He presents no point of resemblance to his great namesake of the later nineteenth century; for he is almost uniformly dull, and has few memorable passages. His sense of proportion is defective; he can neither co-ordinate his information nor set it in its true perspective. We surmise that he was heavily handicapped by possessing the municipal mind, which never varies from generation to generation, as John Galt's *Provost* survives to bear witness. Thus he is greatly concerned to demonstrate that Edinburgh "is the second town in this island in respect to the number of its inhabitants." It is curious to note this early manifestation of the childish "second-city-of-the-Empire" craze, which has done so much of recent years to fill the coffers of Parliamentary bar-risters and agents. Maitland sets about the job with an elaborate apparatus of statistics. He draws up lists of streets and closes, and it is significant that the closes outnumber every other species of thoroughfare taken together by about five to one. He goes to the examination rolls of

¹ 'Royal Edinburgh,' 1890, p. 237.

the incumbents of the city parishes. He analyses the register of burials. And of course he arrives triumphantly at the haven where he would be. Disconcerting as the result must be to the Bristolians, Edinburgh emerges from the enquiry with a population of something over 50,000, the second city of Great Britain. People who know Nottingham and Norwich may affect surprise. But, one house one family is the rule in the South, whereas in the grey metropolis of the North, each floor of a ten-storey "land" or tenement accommodates at least one household. As our historian sagaciously observes, "the number of people in a city or town is not to be judged of by the space within the walls or dimensions of ground whereon the houses are erected, but by the contiguity and height of the buildings."¹ Further, he opines that but for the removal of the Court, Edinburgh "might have outdone divers other royal and other great cities in Europe, both as to dimensions and number of inhabitants."² Yet, in spite of all his foibles, Maitland's successors in the field of local history and topography owe him a heavy debt of gratitude. He had the talent of industry, he was diligent in transcribing original documents, and he accumulated a mass of undigested material for others to sift and utilise. Nichols records a contemporary judgment to the

effect that Maitland "was self-conceited, credulous, knew little, and wrote worse." But the estimate is as harsh in substance as it is slovenly in expression.

Hugo Arnot (*né* Pollock) was another-guess man than Maitland. He supplies just that spice of individuality and liveliness which the other lacks. Born in 1749, he passed advocate in 1772, and died in 1786. By all accounts he was essentially what is known as a "character," a type of which the Parliament House can generally contrive to produce two or three specimens at any given period. His lean and hungry figure was a perpetual incentive to wit in others. Robert Chambers quotes the following lines attributed to Henry Erskine:—

"The Scriptures assure us that much
is forgiven
To flesh and to blood by the mercy of
Heaven;
But I've searched the whole Bible, and
texts can find none
That extend the assurance *to skin and
to bone.*"

—('Traditions of Edinburgh,'
ed. 1880, p. 23.)

Arnot wielded a nervous and caustic pen. He is outspoken in his onslaughts upon contemporary abuses. His account of the abominable state of the Greyfriars' Churchyard leaves nothing to the imagination. Equally "realistic" is his description of the internal economy of the Tolbooth prison. He repudiates the authority of the register of

burials as a safe index to the population, for "it is kept by people whose faculties are impaired by drinking, who forget to-day what was done yesterday: people who have an interest in reducing the list of burials, as thereby they may speculate the share of mortcloth money due to the Charity Workhouse."¹ He has the hardihood to sneer at the *nobile officium* of the Lords of Council and Session, which he thinks "must contain some magic influence of which, like a talisman, the virtues are only known to the sage who prepared it."² He was obviously a strong Moderate, who believed that the sun of enlightenment had arisen to dispel once for all the mists of bigotry and superstition. It was perhaps as well for his peace of mind that he was not spared to see the revival of the Evangelical party with its portentous consequences. A good sample of his turn for raillery is afforded by his comments upon the architectural beauties of the West Kirk.

"Although we are not to expect that the phlegmatic devotion of a modern protestant should consecrate structures to the Deity equal in magnificence to a Grecian temple or a Popish cathedral, yet it is to be wished that gentlemen who profess religious principles and who would be thought lovers of the fine arts would consistently with this profession make some distinction between a church and a barn."³

St Cuthbert's is, unhappily, not the only parish in which the heritors of a previous age have

failed to grasp this subtle difference.

Arnot is perhaps at his best as a recorder of social phenomena. He is glad that Scotch children are not put to school or to work so early in life as children in England. He considers Sir Laurence Dundas's house in St Andrew Square (now the Royal Bank) to be the finest town-house he ever saw. He is severe upon the squalor of the inns, and remarks that the taverns are equally dirty and dismal. Fortune's, at No. 5 Princes Street, which Lord Cockburn extols, had not yet come into being. He notes that, as in taverns, so "in private houses where the entertainment is tolerably genteel, claret is commonly drunk. Port at the same time is excellent of its kind, not resembling the adulterated trash sold under that name in England."⁴ But by Arnot's time the really heavy drinking days were over. The revels of the bar, which so astonished Colonel Mannering, had sobered down, and to Arnot it appeared strange how in the preceding age "a well-employed lawyer was not totally disqualified for his business by the quantity he drank in the course of it."⁵ Lastly, it should be mentioned that he denounces with unsparing vigour the practice of giving "vails" to servants in private houses, which had provoked the scathing animadversions of Dr King, the Jacobite Principal of St Mary Hall, and which made

¹ P. 332.² P. 476.³ P. 277.⁴ P. 348.⁵ P. 354.

many a poor man pause before accepting an invitation to the tables of the great.

To enumerate all who have followed in the footsteps of Maitland and Arnot would be a tedious business. Prominent among them stand Chambers, who rescued from destruction so much transmitted by oral tradition; Wilson, the zealous antiquary; and Grant, the industrious compiler. Mr Stevenson's sketch is too slight to count for much. We can but wish that he had worked on a larger canvas. The others, of course, vary a good deal in merit, but their average level is creditably high, and many of their works have the advantage of being embellished with illustrations which exhibit the all-but-extinct art of the wood-engraver in a most favourable light. This is particularly true of Sir George Reid's contribution to Mrs Oliphant's book which has been already mentioned. We will not pretend that there is not a certain monotony about the series of histories. The same stories are handed on, mechanically, as it were, from one author to another, and before more or less literal reproduction takes place there is not much effort at verification. Major Weir, to be sure—that singular, savoury, experienced Christian of the West Bow—can never pall; but the fiftieth time of reading brings satiety even of the murder of Darnley, the Porteous Mob, and the Douglas cause. The latter-day denizen of

Edinburgh has sometimes been charged with knowing little and caring less about its past. The accusation is probably well founded if it means that he would certainly fail to pass an examination in its antiquities: which invited him, for example, to identify the *locus* of Geordie Boyd's Brig, to impart what he knows about the shop of David Bridges, junior, and to name the modern representative of the New North Kirk. But the formation ten or a dozen years ago of the Old Edinburgh Club was a gratifying indication that an intelligent interest in such matters is as lively as ever, while the annual volumes of its transactions abundantly justify its existence. Contributions such as Mr H. Cockburn's paper on Old Edinburgh Clubs in vol. iii., or Mr W. B. Blaikie's on Edinburgh in the time of the occupation of Prince Charles in vol. ii., are of permanent importance in their respective spheres, and there are many more of the same kind.

It is notorious that, where nature has been most lavish of her gifts, the skill of man has often been most perversely exercised as though deliberately to neutralise her bounty. In regions where every prospect pleases human handiwork has too frequently been merely vile. That this is the case with Edinburgh up to a certain point is not to be gainsaid. It is alarming to be told that since 1860 two-

thirds of the ancient buildings in the Old Town have been demolished. We begin to wonder whether the New Town has really redressed the balance of the Old. But perhaps, on a review of all the circumstances, our predominant feeling should rather be thankfulness that much has been preserved than vain regret for much that has disappeared. The competent, or incompetent, authorities of Edinburgh have not been greater offenders than those of many another venerable city in their handling of the treasure committed to their charge. They knew no better, and honestly believed that in destroying some priceless relic of the past they were accelerating the march of "progress." The removal of Trinity Hospital with its Collegiate Church was certainly a piece of gross and inexcusable vandalism. So was the first "restoration" of St Giles' in 1829. But it is fair to recall the appalling series of crimes perpetrated in England in the middle of last century in the name of restoration, and the taste which permitted the beautiful Cathedral of Glasgow to be dwarfed by the erection of the buildings which overshadow it is to the full as reprehensible as that of William Burn. All that could be done to remedy that lamentable mistake was accomplished by the later restoration of 1879. It is greatly to be regretted that a deficiency in the available funds prevented the completion of the University in accordance

with the original plans. Even so, there is much that is truly dignified and impressive about the building; but the quadrangle on a dull winter's afternoon is the most inhospitable and cheerless spot in Europe, and must have struck a chill into many a young and sanguine bosom. The most glaring illustrations of recent vandalism are furnished by the two railway hotels. The one at the east end of Princes Street effectually obstructs the view of the Calton Hill from the west; while the one at the west end of Princes Street no less effectually intercepts the prospect of Corstorphine Hill from the east. St Mary's Cathedral is dull and cold. Its two new spires make no difference to its general effect. Scotland provides numerous examples of "heritors' Gothic." Sir Gilbert Scott's, while decidedly more correct and conventional, is equally frigid and uninspired. The working-class district of Tynecastle, not yet forty years old, leaves much to be desired in point of spaciousness and amenity. But what would you have when the politicians take to building? Its tenements were run up in haste as a political job in order that their prospective inhabitants might vote for Mr Gladstone when he first stood for Midlothian, the district being then outside the parliamentary boundary of the city. We need say no more than that they are eminently worthy of the purpose they were designed to serve.

Municipal institutions have much to answer for, but a great deal may be forgiven to the Corporation which laid out the New Town of Edinburgh. It is indeed planned upon generous and noble lines, and the ingenuity of latter-day "town-planners" will be sorely taxed to match it. To set the scheme agoing, ground had to be given off at the north end of the North Bridge for a nominal feu-duty, and, as a further inducement to intending feuars, immunity from public burdens was thrown into the bargain. Curiously enough, at this very moment an action is pending in the Court of Session to ascertain the precise limits of the exemption thus conferred. It was characteristic of municipal statesmanship that, when the success of the venture was assured, it should have occurred to the Town Council to turn an additional penny by building along the south side of Princes Street. Fortunately, this nefarious project was nipped in the bud, thanks to what Arnot terms "the liberal and extensive ideas" of Lord Mansfield. Whether the decision of the House of Lords is good law has often been doubted, but there can be no question that Mansfield's vigorous opinion deterred the Council from proceeding with so shocking an enterprise, and the matter was finally concluded in 1816 by an Act of Parliament

which prohibited the erection of any building whatever other than St John's Episcopal Chapel "on any part of the ground belonging to the community of the said city on the south side of Princes Street, excepting a gardener's or keeper's lodge, or hothouses or conservatories."

"Edinburgh is not considerable for trade, but depends chiefly for its support upon the College of Justice, the seminaries of education, and the inducements which as a capital it affords to genteel people to reside in it." So writes Arnot,¹ and his statement held good in large measure down to, say, fifty years ago. Law and education are still its chief industries (banking and insurance might be added), and it is hardly possible even now to walk in its streets without being sensible that you are inhaling a different atmosphere from that which prevails in a vast commercial community like Glasgow. But of late there has been a steady development of industrial life. Many old-established businesses have attained a magnitude their founders never dreamt of, and many new undertakings have sprung up to compete for a share of their prosperity. The sound of a factory whistle or "hooter" was rarely if ever to be heard in the boyhood of men no more than middle-aged; whereas now it may be caught at stated hours in any

¹ P. 337.

quarter of the town. It is doubtless of good omen that all the industrial eggs are not in a single basket. Edinburgh does not sink or swim with one industry, as Dundee with the spinning of jute. Before the war there was a good deal of wild talk in the newspapers about promoting still more assiduously the growth of trade and manufactures. One set of Town Councillors was for converting the capital into the similitude of Bradford, while another would fain have transplanted to the Forth the irresistible charms of Blackpool. The ideals were incompatible, but in point of fact both were mistaken, and neither seems to hold out the promise of better things to come. As for the professions of law and education, the war has set a deep mark upon them. Upon what vocation has it not? The schools find it hard to "carry on" for want of men to teach. The University finds it hard to carry on for want of men to be taught. The male student has all but disappeared from some of the class-rooms, and there is a half-hearted air about those who remain. As for the Parliament House, it is little better than a desert. The precincts of Themis might afford an habitation for the wild ass. There are scarcely more members of Faculty now in attendance than are necessary to assist the Courts in transacting their proper business. The life of the place is for the time being extinct, and, could the

ghosts of John Gibson Lockhart and Thomas Carlyle revisit the Outer House, they would find but the merest sprinkling of counsel and agents on the floor to remind them of the animated and bustling scene which, each in his own manner, they have so vividly depicted. The law-room is all but depleted of its occupants. The corridor, where so many litigants and their advisers were wont to take counsel together, is in much the same case. The strident call of the macer (for experience proves that no macers have the "piping tones" attributed to the race by Mr Stevenson) echoes round the empty Hall, and supplies what is requisite to complete the general effect of desolation and gloom.

In the period which has elapsed since Lord Cookburn's death, manners and customs have undergone very little alteration compared with the revolution he had witnessed in the course of his life. But any relics of ancient habits which continued into the 'fifties may now be sought for by the curious inquirer in vain. No longer does 'The Edinburgh Courant' furnish the breakfast-table of the stern and unbending Tory with what the late Mr Sala would have called its matutinal pabulum. Gone are the tavern-dinners in the Fleshmarket Close, where the "bloods" of the bar used to hold high revel. Gone, too, are the snug and jovial supper-

parties at which the host locked the door and pocketed the key, so that no reluctant guest might effect a premature escape. The tendency towards a strict sobriety has become more and more marked. As Sir Herbert Maxwell points out, the introduction of the after-dinner cigarette has interfered with the steady progress of the decanter. For the same reason, and also, we fancy, because of a succession of disappointing vintages in the Gironde, claret began to go out and port to come in about thirty years ago. Hardly any one thinks of "laying down" a cellar. The wine-merchant's customer buys what he wants in small quantities as he wants it. Dinner parties before the war had come to be much less formidable affairs than they once were; and the banquet itself had ceased to be a Gargantuan repast. The voice of the Fishermans' or Newhaven fishwife is seldom heard in the streets. The succulent bivalve which the fishmonger retails, hails, we suspect, from Whitstable. Old men recall with a sigh that the produce of the Forth oyster-beds could once be purchased at the rate of half-a-crown a hundred. The melancholy cadences of "Caller ou!" and "Caller partan!" (more lugubrious and less piercing than the yell with which the Maggie Mucklebackits of Biarritz announce their wares: "Ohé-é-é! les poissons frais!") no longer disturb the repose of the slumber-

ing babe, and throw him into an ecstasy of terror. In a word, local peculiarities have been pared down or smoothed out, and Edinburgh has come to resemble other places in the British Isles. Not even the Lord Justice-General nor the Lord Provost can hope that, when the time comes—and may it long be deferred—there will be borne by a "saulie" in the place of honour in his funeral procession THE GREAT GUMPHION OR MORT-HEAD.

There is high authority for the proposition that

"Fruits fail and love dies and time ranges ;"

and no city with any pretensions to antiquity can fail to yield an abundant crop of reminders of the transitoriness of things mundane and the vanity of earthly hopes. The New Town of Edinburgh dates back barely a hundred and fifty years; yet even there instances are not wanting of the hackneyed but perennial truth. There are districts which have gone down in the world, and there are districts which have never risen in the world, at least to the extent anticipated by those who first exploited them. Self-contained houses have to be transmogrified as best they may into "main doors" and common stairs, if a rent is to be earned. "Westward the course of *fashion* takes its way." Roomy and almost palatial edifices, built, as though to stand a siege or a bombard-

ment, in an age when domestic servants were to be had in plenty, are exchanged for more modest dwellings, capable of being swept and garnished by a small and leisure-loving staff. And if such lessons may be learned from the New Town, how much more impressive are those to be extracted from the Old! Had the archangel Gabriel warned the inmates of the High Street and the Canongate two hundred years ago that their homes were destined to become the abode of destitution, he would have been received with an incredulity as absolute (though less polite) as if he were to deliver a similar message to-day to the denizens

of Moray Place or of Drum-sheugh Gardens. When the third centenary number of 'MAGA' duly makes its appearance, its readers will know whether such a prediction, assuming it to be made, has been verified or not. Meanwhile, let us bear well in mind and lay to heart how Alexander Alesse speaks of the Via Vaccarum, or Cowgate, in the sixteenth century: "In quâ habitant patricii et senatores urbis, et in quâ sunt principum regni palatia; ubi nihil est humile aut rusticum, sed omnia magnifica." Seldom has the instability of earthly greatness been so strikingly enforced as by these simple words.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

AN EXPERIMENT IN SANITATION.

IN every province of India the village is the basis of society, and the village official is an important person in the eyes of the powers that be—sometimes, perhaps, a little too important, as he does not always represent popular opinion as closely as he is supposed to; finding it often more to his interest to put forward as the opinion of the village the view that he thinks will appeal to his superiors, or that will save trouble and further inquiries. In Burma the *thugyi*, or village headman, is appointed by the Deputy Commissioner, after an inquiry held in the village, where the villagers vote for the various candidates if there be more than one. The Deputy Commissioner is under no obligation to appoint the most popular candidate; hereditary claims are always considered, and a good character and a reasonable amount of *auza*, or influence, are essential. The duties of the headman are multifarious, and tend to increase with the progress of civilisation. He is responsible for the maintenance of law and order in his village, and has to report serious crimes to the police station, which may be ten miles or more distant; he can impose small fines for petty offences—such as abusive language (to which the Burman of both sexes is much addicted), drunkenness, petty

theft, and disobedience of the lawful orders of himself and higher authorities; he has to collect the revenue and pay it into the Treasury, which may be twenty or thirty miles away, at fixed dates; he has to register births and deaths in the village, including the cause of death—a duty for which he is hardly qualified, causes of death being usually three in number—"children's diseases" for infants, "old man's disease" for all over fifty, and fever for the remainder; he has in most parts of Burma to keep up the village fence, the village being surrounded by a stockade of bamboo or thorns, which serves a double purpose of keeping out dacoits and cattle thieves, and preventing leopards from coming in at night and killing cattle; and he has to see that the village gates are closed at night, and that watchmen are posted at them to open them for lawful ingress and egress; lately also, since sanitation has become so popular with the powers that be, he is expected to keep his village clean and sanitary—a somewhat difficult task in a country where the houses are flimsy mat shanties raised on posts, with split bamboo floors through which all the rubbish is allowed to fall, and underneath which the cattle are penned at night.

For all this he receives a percentage on the revenue he collects, and the popularity of the appointment naturally varies with the amount of the revenue. In small villages in the poorer parts of the country his pay may be only twenty or thirty rupees a year; and in these cases there is very little rivalry for the post, even among Burmans, who love above all things a position of authority. Some unfortunate youth who is likely to give no trouble to the rest of the community frequently finds greatness thrust upon him by the unanimous vote of his fellow-villagers. In larger and richer villages, however, where his pay may amount to a thousand rupees a year, and enable him to build himself a substantial wooden house and live in affluence and hire coolies to work his land for him, the position is much sought after. Even in these cases, however, his life is not altogether a bed of roses; if he is too easy-going his fence will fall into disrepair, and his village will become so dirty as to attract the attention even of the Burmese Myook, the local magistrate, who is his immediate superior, and eventually he will be reported to the Deputy Commissioner, and warned or fined, or finally dismissed if he persists too long in his *laissez-faire* policy; on the other hand, if he is too energetic his villagers will rebel, and his life will be made a misery: he runs little danger of violence to his person, for the Burman does not often

take his revenge in that way, but he is likely to get up one morning and find his best pair of plough-bullocks hamstrung, and he is fairly certain to be made the subject of complaints that he is extorting money from his flock. These complaints, no doubt, often have a basis of truth, but they can rarely be proved on inquiry; they serve their purpose, however, of annoying the thugyi, and giving him unnecessary journeys to headquarters to make his defence, and they form the Burman villager's commonest weapon of attack.

Ywathit was a large village with a fertile tract of paddy land all round it; the thugyi drew some eight hundred rupees a year, and as it was only eight miles along a good road to the Treasury the post was well worth having, and everybody knew that there would be keen competition for the appointment on the death of Maung Salwè, who had held it since the annexation, and whose father had been a local official under the Burmese *régime*. Maung Salwè was a good thugyi of the old school, who had either kept bad characters out of the village by making their lives unpleasant in a variety of petty ways if they tried to remain there, or had at any rate taken care that if they lived there they exercised their professions at a sufficient distance to cause him no trouble. He was a rich man, as riches go in Burma, and seeing that the English had come to stay, had sent his

only son to school to learn English: the son was now a clerk, and likely to be made a Myook before long, so that he had no wish to succeed his father, and there was no direct hereditary candidate. There were three applicants for the vacancy, of whom only two were worth considering, Maung Gyi and Maung Po Ta. Maung Gyi was a cousin of Maung Salwè's second wife, and made the most of his hereditary claims, the most shadowing connection being sufficient to make a candidate "Yoya" or hereditary with the Burman, who calls all his cousins to the third and fourth degree his brothers. He also had a connection with the Government, as the Myook's head clerk was his wife's cousin, and the previous year he had judiciously consented to cultivate part of his land with a new variety of paddy which the Deputy Commissioner, who was a keen amateur agriculturist, had been anxious to introduce into the district. Altogether his prospects were most favourable, and if old Maung Salwè had resigned before his death he could have secured Maung Gyi's appointment without any difficulty. The most respectable members of the community supported him as it was, but his rival Po Ta had a large following among the younger villagers, and was a dangerous competitor.

The village had increased considerably of late years, and was beginning to feel the pressure of population on the soil; the best lands were all occu-

pied, the young men who had no land found that they had to go a long way and expend a good deal of labour in clearing fresh land for cultivation, and there were several of them who managed to live without doing any obvious work. No cattle had ever been lost from Ywathit in Maung Salwè's time, and no stolen bullocks had ever been traced to the village, but there were rumours about some of the young men. No breath of scandal had ever touched Po Ta, who was a well-to-do man, with as much paddy land as three yoke of bullocks could plough, and who had started to insure his prosperity in the next world by building a rest-house outside the village; but he was easy-going and was the favoured candidate of the younger generation, who had good reason to fear that Maung Gyi would be unpleasantly strict, and that their lives might not be too easy under his rule. They put up one of their number as a third candidate, not with any idea of his being appointed (he was a young man of no influence in the village), but simply to lessen Maung Gyi's chances by drawing attention to the fact, set out with great detail in the third candidate's claim, that Maung Gyi's younger brother, his real brother too, not a mere cousin, had been fined fifteen rupees only two years before for illegal gambling. This was intended to lower Maung Gyi's moral character in the eyes of the Government, but its effect was somewhat discounted by the

fact that the brother in question was now dead, and that Maung Gyi had not been on speaking terms with him for several years before the gambling episode. It may, however, have induced a few waverers to vote for Po Ta, and when the Myook came to the village to hold his inquiry the votes were about equally divided. The Myook knew that Maung Gyi was the best man for the post, but was afraid to recommend him openly for fear he might be accused of favouring the family of his head clerk, so he sent up a non-committal report, setting out in detail the merits of both Maung Gyi and Po Ta, and saying that he awaited the honourable orders of the Deputy Commissioner on the subject. The Deputy Commissioner, who had made Maung Gyi's acquaintance over the new variety of paddy, appointed him, and not long afterwards happened to visit the village. Maung Gyi had to perfection the gift, not uncommon among Burmans, of agreeing intelligently with the views of his superior officers, and even, apparently, of appreciating the reasons for these views. He praised highly the new variety of paddy, of which, as a matter of fact, he did not like the taste, and which he had some difficulty in selling; and the Deputy Commissioner thought he was a suitable man to form the subject of an experiment in village sanitation, so he took him round the village and pointed out the evils of keeping cattle under the houses. The head-

man agreed that it was not conducive to cleanliness, but apologised for it as being the custom. This roused the Deputy Commissioner, who was an ardent Liberal, and he expatiated on the beauties of the village with all the cattle-pens set in a row along the inside of the fence. He traced to the present custom the high rate of infantile mortality in Burmese villages; the headman was forced to admit that fourteen babies had died in the village in the last year, their names were entered in his death register, and he assented with some show of enthusiasm to the Deputy Commissioner's suggestion that he should persuade the villagers to set back one side of the village fence some twenty or thirty feet, and make a row of cattle-pens along the extra land thus taken into the village.

"You must try and make the villagers understand the advantage of it," said the Deputy Commissioner as he was leaving the village; "don't just give them an order to do it without any explanations; it is for their advantage."

"Certainly, your honour," said Maung Gyi; "it will be a great advantage to the poor people; I will have it done at once."

"Very well then; I shall come back here in a few months' time and see the result;" and the Deputy Commissioner rode off, well satisfied with himself and with Maung Gyi.

That evening, when all the villagers had returned from

their fields, the headman beat his gong to call them to his house. They came strolling up in twos and threes, wondering vaguely whether this summons had any connection with the Deputy Commissioner's visit in the morning.

"Ho, Ko Pyu," called Shwe Lon, as he passed Ko Pyu's house, "the gong is beating; are you going to see what it is about?"

"I suppose I must," said Ko Pyu, coming downstairs reluctantly with a large blanket wrapped round his shoulders to keep out the cold; "last time he beat his gong I did not go, and he fined me a rupee; he is too fond of fining us; U Salwè hardly ever fined anybody, but this man has no *auza*, so he is always inflicting fines. He thinks too much of himself since he was made thugyi."

"I think it is some order the Deputy Commissioner gave him this morning," said Shwe Lon; "they walked past my house, and I heard them talking about cattle-pens, but I could not hear what they said."

When all the villagers had come, and were sitting round in the thugyi's compound, he started to talk; the Deputy Commissioner would have been surprised if he had heard, but explanations and persuasion are not suited to the Oriental mind, and Maung Gyi gave the pith of the idea briefly and forcibly.

"It is the Deputy Commissioner's order," he said, "that you are to pull down the west

fence of the village and build it twenty cubits farther out, and then make cattle-pens along the inside of the fence, and keep your cattle there; this is to be done within one month; any man who does not make his share of the new fence properly will be fined five rupees, and anybody who keeps his cattle under his house after the new pens are ready will also be fined five rupees."

There was considerable discussion among the villagers as to the reason of this order, which was highly unpopular.

"I don't like it," said one elderly man; "three years ago Ko San Tu was angry with me because he said my bullock ate his maize, and he came and tried to hamstring my bullock by night. The dog barked, and I woke up and saw him, and he ran away; I saw a man with something like a *dah* in his hand, and I am sure it was Ko San Tu, though his wife said he had fever that night and could not get up; if my bullocks had been at the other end of the village instead of under my house, he would have cut them both, and I should only have known it in the morning."

"It is true," said another man—"and besides, bad men will steal our bullocks if they are so far away; all they have to do is to break through the fence and take them out, and nobody will hear them."

Next day a deputation went to the thugyi to discuss the matter, and he condescended to give them the Deputy

Commissioner's reason. "It is not true that babies die because the cattle are kept under the house," said one man; "Ko Pu has never had any cattle at all; he works as a coolie for other men, and his last four babies all died; they died of convulsions."

"Well, it is an order," said the thugyi, "and it has got to be carried out, so you had better begin to pull down the fence."

The matter was discussed for a fortnight before anything was done, but it was finally decided that, as it was the Deputy Commissioner's own order, it was no use going to appeal to him about it, and they began to pull down and rebuild the fence. It was a stout thorn fence, about six feet high, and they had to cut extra thorn-bushes, and it meant a lot of work, and the scheme did not become any more popular; the thugyi let the month extend to two months, then he examined the new fence and fined Shwe Lon and Ko Pyu five rupees each, because their portions of it were conspicuously thin. It was at last finished, and a row of bamboo cattle-pens was erected along the inside, and by degrees most of the village cattle were installed in them; but a good many more fines had been inflicted to bring about this result, and the headman found himself extremely unpopular in the village. There was not room for all the village cattle in the new pens, and there was much competition to be in the lucky minority who

might still keep their cattle under their houses. Maung Gyi himself had a two-storied house and kept his cattle in a pen adjoining it, so he considered that his family's health needed no further protection, and declined to use one of the new pens; and the wealthier and more influential members of the village were allowed to follow his example as a general rule, which served to increase the headman's unpopularity among the poorer and younger villagers. One morning a gap was found in the fence, and a pair of bullocks had disappeared: it was the part of the fence allotted to Shwe Lon, and he was fined another five rupees, on the ground that the fence must have been weak for the thieves to be able to break through there. This only served to annoy him without satisfying the rest of the villagers, and there was a general reversion to the old custom of keeping the cattle under the houses, which the thugyi strove to repress by further fines. Discontent expressed itself more and more loudly, and the great majority of the villagers were now anxious to get rid of Maung Gyi at all costs.

The Deputy Commissioner paid a second visit to the village, and praised the new pens so loudly that a deputation which had been waiting to present a petition to him for their abolition considered it useless, and it was decided that other means must be found.

Shwe Lon and Maung Pyu were talking one night in the latter's house, and Shwe Lon

vowed that he could not stand it any longer and was going to leave the village. "What are you going to do?" said Maung Pyu.

Shwe Lon looked round carefully and lowered his voice. "You know Ko Yan Gyi of Magyigon," he said; "he has got a gun and he wants some followers, and I think I am going out with him."

"I don't think that dacoity is much good," said Maung Pyu; "the leader always takes three-quarters of the stuff, and never does any of the work himself; if you are caught, you will go to jail for life like the men who dacoited U Le's house at Tantabin last year; everybody knows that they only got a hundred rupees each, and Bo Bwa who arranged it, and was never even arrested, got over a thousand. It is much safer to steal cattle and sell them back to their owners, and much more profitable. Ko Thet Ya makes fifty rupees a month that way. If you are caught you can't be sent to jail for more than two years; Ko Lon who has just come out of jail for it told me so himself."

Shwe Lon pondered for some time, and then started to discuss details, and they finally agreed to go into business together. The business, locally known as *pyan-pe*, which means give back, was masterly in its simplicity. A man wanders round the edge of the grazing grounds in the middle of the day, finds a bullock straying off by itself out of sight of any herdsman, catches it, and leads it off to some place well away

from frequented paths, and ties it up. In the evening when the village cattle are driven back, the owner finds that he is short of a bullock. Next morning a note is found pinned to his house-post, or to the village gate, to say that if he wants the bullock back he must bring money, thirty or forty rupees probably, rather less than the value of the bullock, to such and such a place that evening. The note usually adds that if he informs the police, or searches the jungle, the bullock will at once either be killed or be taken away and sold. This threat is often taken for granted, and the easy-going Burman would in most cases sooner pay the money, which he knows he can reduce by haggling, and get the bullock back at once, than have the trouble of going to the police station and risking the loss of his bullock, with the unlikely result, which in any case is very little satisfaction to him, of the culprit being caught and sent to prison. So he goes to the rendezvous next evening with as much money as he thinks will satisfy the thief, and is met by a man, possibly disguised, possibly a stranger who thinks disguise unnecessary, usually a go-between and not the original thief. They while away an hour or so in haggling, and eventually the man closes for an amount considerably less than was originally demanded. He takes the money, and either brings back the bullock at once, or sends it back next day. To the credit of the Burman be it said that

the animal is always sent back, and the man never absconds with the money; perhaps he realises that if he did the villagers would refuse to play the game any longer. Details naturally vary in different cases, but the main outlines are always the same; it would probably not work with a subject less easy-going than the Burman, but with him it is most profitable, and has become quite a national institution. It was rather a novelty in the neighbourhood when Shwe Lon and Maung Pyu went into the business, and they did very well, and soon took in one or two partners from other villages, so that there should always be a stranger to do the haggling with the owner, which they found too risky if the owner lived in Ywathit itself.

The headman, though energetic enough in his own way, had little use for the police, who for a long time did not hear of what was going on; but rumours eventually got about, and a keen young Sub-Inspector of Police came to the village and abused Maung Gyi roundly for not having reported the thefts, and told him that if the matter came to the ears of the Deputy Commissioner he would probably lose his appointment. Maung Gyi, to save his face, promptly fined five unfortunate villagers, who had had their cattle stolen and had paid to recover them, for not having reported their cases to the police, which further increased his unpopularity. He was extremely

annoyed at the way in which the Sub-Inspector, who was by many years his junior, had spoken to him; and he declared that he would show that he was a better detective than the police if another case occurred, and told the villagers to let him know if any more cattle were taken, and he would help them to catch the man by taking out marked coins to give him. Shwe Lon and Maung Pyu listened with much interest, and went home together.

Shwe Lon had a pair of bullocks of his own, and was careful to do enough cultivation to appear to earn his living by that means, and a few evenings later he went and told the thugyi that only one of these bullocks had returned from the grazing ground. The thugyi told him to let him know if he received any news; and next morning he came and said that, just as he was going to sleep the night before, a voice called to him from outside the village (his house was just against the fence) that if he wanted the bullock he must bring forty rupees to the tamarind-tree on Ko Po Saing's field east of the village next evening after dark. Maung Gyi questioned him about it. "The voice sounded like Ko Tun Din of Magyigon," said Shwe Lon, "and I am rather afraid to go and meet him after dark. I had a quarrel with him last year over the boundary between our fields, and I am afraid that he will cut me with a *dah* if I go out. I think I

shall get somebody else to take the money. He said that if more than one man came the bullock would not be given back."

"I think it is very likely to be Ko Tun Din," said the headman; "I have suspected him before. He gambles and smokes opium. If you will give me the money I will go out; I am not afraid."

"But I do not think he would have dealings with you. He would be afraid, because you are thugyi."

"I will disguise myself so that he will not know who I am. Now give me twenty-five rupees and we will mark them; I do not think he will want more than that; when I come back we will go to Magyigon before daylight and search his house with the village elders, and if the money is found he will go to jail; I can do this without the police, and I shall get a certificate from the Deputy Commissioner if it comes off."

They marked the rupees carefully, and Shwe Lon left the house, remarking casually as he went out that he was going to a funeral at another village, and would not be back till after dark, but would come to the thugyi at once when he returned.

Two hours later Shwe Lon was sitting in the Sub-Inspector's house talking to him: "Yes," he said, "it is two days ago that my bullock was stolen, and I did not come and report at once because I was afraid; I am a poor man and have never been to Court, and am very much afraid of

the Government; then yesterday morning I found this letter telling me to bring out forty rupees in the evening; Ko Pyu and I talked it over, and as we suspected the man, we marked twenty-five rupees, and I took them out last night and gave them. Ko Pyu said that if it was the man we thought he would go next day and ask him to pay back ten rupees which he owed him, and if they were the marked rupees we would then threaten to report him to the police unless he gave back the rest of the money."

"Who was the man?" asked the Sub-Inspector.

"Well," said Shwe Lon, "when I went out last night to give the money I found a man whom I did not know; he had his face wrapped up, and I could not recognise him, but he was a stoutish man; he took the twenty-five rupees and said the bullock would come back this morning; this morning I got this other letter which says that the rupees are not good, and I must bring out unmarked rupees this evening if I want the bullock. I think he will bring back the marked rupees I gave him yesterday, so I came to you; if you come with me we can catch him with the marked rupees on him."

"That will be very good," said the Sub-Inspector, "and you will get a reward if he is caught. I suppose there are people who know about these letters and the loss of your bullock. Did you tell the thugyi?"

"I do not think the thugyi

knows," answered Shwe Lon; "he does not like me, so I did not tell him, but I told several people about my bullock and about the first letter. I did not tell anybody about the second letter, because I came straight to you as soon as I found it; but it is in the same hand as the first, and they both mention the same place, the tamarind-tree on Ko Po Saing's field east of the village."

"Where did you find the letters?"

"They were both thrown over the fence by night into my house."

Shwe Lon remained at the police station till the afternoon, and left with the Sub-Inspector and a constable in time to reach the place appointed about dark; they went across country to avoid meeting anybody, and hid in some bushes close to the tamarind-tree. They had not waited long when a figure appeared from the direction of the village, a stoutish man with his face covered by a blanket. Shwe Lon whispered to the Sub-Inspector that he was the man. They let him come up close and then all ran out at him. He ran shouting for help, but they easily caught him up, and the Sub-Inspector laid him out with a blow on the head from a bamboo. He fell on his face stunned, and some rupees rolled out of his waist-cloth. The Sub-Inspector struck a match and examined them; they were all marked exactly as Shwe Lon had described, and after some search in his clothes and on the ground twenty-five were

discovered. They had not taken much notice of the man yet, as he was clearly *hors de combat*; but after counting the money they turned their attention to him, to find, much to the astonishment of all, the well-known features of the thugyi carefully disguised with white chalk. This was by far the biggest *coup* of the Sub-Inspector's career, and he was a little alarmed at the importance of his capture; but there was no backing out now, for the villagers had come running out, attracted by the noise of the chase just as they started to examine the man, and at least a dozen witnesses had seen their headman in this awkward situation.

They took him back to the village, where he soon recovered consciousness and commenced his story. Shwe Lon, of course, stoutly denied his interviews with the thugyi that morning and the previous night, and the thugyi could produce no evidence of them, as he had been alone in his house when they took place. Shwe Lon had the two letters to support his version, and named a number of villagers who knew of his bullock having been lost two days before and who had seen the first letter.

Next morning the Sub-Inspector completed his investigations and took the thugyi off to the police station in handcuffs, protesting loudly and vowing terrible vengeance against the Sub-Inspector, whom he accused of being in league with Shwe Lon against him.

The case came up for trial

in due course and attracted considerable attention; the thugyi had got an English barrister to defend him, but the most searching cross-examination failed to disclose any serious discrepancies in the evidence; Shwe Lon candidly admitted that he had been fined several times by the thugyi, and was not on good terms with him; but the magistrate had no choice but to frame a charge after hearing all the prosecution witnesses, though he could not help feeling that there was something suspicious about the case, and hoped that the headman would be able to produce sufficient evidence to allow him to give him the benefit of the doubt. The barrister put in his list of witnesses, and the case was adjourned for summonses to be served on them, though he had little hope of getting his client acquitted, certain as he felt that the whole case was concocted.

However, fortune favoured Maung Gyi at the last moment; Shwe Lon and Maung Pyu were so pleased that they went to the liquor shop that evening to drink to the success of their plot. The Burman in his cups is not always discreet, and they let fall one or two injudicious remarks in the presence of strangers. One of these strangers had been paid by Maung Gyi's relations to follow them, in the vague hope of some evidence turning up, and seeing which way the wind blew, he went off and

called his friends. They stationed three or four respectable men of the town, whose evidence could hardly be doubted, outside the door of the liquor shop, and sent for the Inspector of Police, who had all along suspected that his Sub-Inspector had been following a false clue; and the spy went in and plied the two with more drink, and got into conversation with them about the case, with the result that they very soon gave away the whole business. When they had thoroughly incriminated themselves, the Inspector came in, and they had the pleasure of spending the rest of the night in the same police station as Maung Gyi. The Inspector reported to the magistrate next day, and Maung Gyi was at once released on bail and soon formally acquitted, and Shwe Lon and Maung Pyu found themselves in the dock on a charge of perjury. They were sentenced to five years each, and the Deputy Commissioner, who had himself tried the case, and who now saw pretty clearly what had been happening, advised Maung Gyi to rule his village with a lighter hand in future.

The Deputy Commissioner was transferred not long after, and if you go to Ywathit now you will find the cattle standing under the houses, knee-deep in mud, while at the west end of the village along the fence is a row of broken-down empty cattle-pens.

A LATE WOOING.

AM I the young man that you sent for to see?
An' tell me what is it you're wantin' with me?—
*"'Tis you that I sent for, 'tis you that I need,
An' what I am wantin' you know it indeed."*

Then spare me the tale, an' I'll save you the blush,
For all you would offer I'd care not a rush.—
*"Sure then it was false what you said long ago,
An' moved me to love you to bring me to woe."*

I said that I loved you as dear as my life,
You mocked when I wanted to make you my wife.—
*"Forget it, forget it! that's over an' bye,
An' if I must lose you I'm soon like to die."*

Oh never be thinkin' you'll win me to rue,
If you live or you die or whatever you do!
You killed the young love that you cared not to save,
I'll smile when the young grass is green on your grave.

MOIRA O'NEILL.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE DARDANELLES REPORT—THE REIGN OF THE AMATEUR—THE WAR COUNCIL OF THREE—THE TONGUE-TIED EXPERTS—A PURELY NAVAL OPERATION—"VAGUENESS AND WANT OF PRECISION"—LORD KITCHENER'S PART—HENRY CUST—"THE PALL MALL GAZETTE"—THE TALKER AS ARTIST.

THE report of the Dardanelles Commission is a document which no Englishman can contemplate with satisfaction. It is a bitter indictment at once of our Ministers and of our method of government. In the system, which makes so grave a dereliction of duty possible, there are the seeds of debility and disaster. None, who had any share in the conduct of the war, comes out scatheless. Demagogues and experts alike failed to do what was expected of them. And as we read the report and weigh its calm, cold, passionless conclusions, we can only wonder that we were not lying long ago, a prostrate and defeated foe, under the heel of Germany.

If we would understand the full meaning of the report, we must carry our mind back to the sanguine, careless days before the war. It was then that our indispensable Ministers began the congenial task of exposing the country defenceless to the enemy. For reasons of their own, they refused to give the people a hint of warning about the danger which they knew threatened it. There were comings and goings between Berlin and London which were no better than a wanton waste of railway

fares. If Lord Haldane picked up any scraps of the truth, and he says he did, he hid them scrupulously in his wallet. The people, he tells us, was not interested in defence, and he (it may be supposed) was interested only in what the people wanted. So we were all caught in a vicious circle, and we drifted into war without the prevision and the preparation which Lord Haldane knew to be necessary.

We drifted into war, and then our omnipotent Ministers drifted as easily down the current of failure, as they had drifted in those golden days when they exchanged for votes whatever money, whatever policies, whatever promises were demanded of them. They had not reflected upon the heavy exactions of thought and skill which a great war would make upon them. The old Committee of Imperial Defence was merely a consultative or advisory body. The Cabinet, a well-established debating society, consisted of twenty-two persons, and was far too large to control the conduct of a war. And so, says the report, "for four months, during which time events of the utmost importance were occurring, the machinery employed for design-

ing and controlling the higher operations of the war was both clumsy and inefficient."

After a period of haphazard inefficiency a change was made, and a War Council was instituted which had full powers to decide and to act. And of this War Council three members—the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for War, and the First Lord of the Admiralty—carried on their shoulders the chief burden of responsibility. We have nothing to say against the number. Where prompt decisions are to be taken, three men of experience and resolution are absolutely sufficient. We have a great deal to say about the choice of the three. One only—Lord Kitchener—was an expert, and upon him was cast the necessity of enrolling and training the new armies, which have given so splendid an account of themselves in the field—ample work for one man. The other two were laymen completely ignorant of the art of war, and yet buoyed up by an absurd sense of their own importance, acquired in the mimic and ridiculous contests of the hustings. Moreover, they were as ill-matched as ever two men could be. Mr Asquith, indolent and cynical, had a rooted dislike to exerting his authority. As Prime Minister, he should have been supreme. Upon him rested the real responsibility of defence. It was his business to discover what should be done and to see that it was properly carried out. If he felt himself inadequate, as indeed he was, to bear the

weight thrust upon him, he should have made way for a better, stronger man. It was no time, in the crisis of England's fortune, to remain in office for the sake of its dignity and emolument. Yet Mr Asquith clung to his post with a feverish tenacity, and set the legend going that the resignation of himself or any one of his colleagues would be a national calamity. But while he clung to his post he made little or no attempt to control his colleague, Mr Churchill, whose unbridled impulses were a constant danger to the State. Thus we faced the Germans with an indifferent Prime Minister, an overtaxed Secretary for War, who was busy achieving what before him had seemed impossible, and a First Lord who thought that to wish anything was to accomplish it, who brooked neither counsel nor interference, and who was prepared to rush thoughtlessly into such adventures as knowledge and experience would have taught him were hopelessly impracticable.

But, it may be objected, there stood at the elbows of these laymen, chosen by the people to provide pensions and other toys, as fine a body of experts as you might wish to see. There were Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson, surely competent, both of them, to keep a reckless layman in the right path. Without their advice, freely tendered, the British Empire was, to be sure, the plaything of Mr Churchill, who knew no more about naval matters than any demagogue

might pick up during a sojourn at the Admiralty. And Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson preserved an obstinate silence. At the War Council they were merely *καφὰ πρόσωπα*, pleasant ornaments in a room, and as mum as though they had been carved in stone. "We were the experts there," says Lord Fisher, "who were to open our mouths when told to." They were not told to. They were not members of the War Council. That privilege was reserved for members of the Cabinet, "and the others were simply there ready to answer questions, if asked." And practically they were never asked. Mr Churchill's omniscience needed no advice, and so we rushed into the enterprise of the Dardanelles without the help of any one save of a Minister, who in these matters was, and must have been, an amateur.

It may be admitted at once that the Cabinet Ministers were in complete disagreement with their experts as to the functions which these experts were there to perform. Mr Churchill believed that his "two naval colleagues and friends had the right, the knowledge, and the power at any moment to correct him or dissent from what he said, and were fully cognisant of their rights." And this patent disagreement made the confusion worse confounded. Lord Fisher declared that he must keep silence or resign. Mr Churchill took Lord Fisher's silence for assent. Thus there was no possibility of approach between the two men. Lord

Fisher's practical knowledge was kept locked up in his own breast. Mr Churchill's slapdash methods appeared to carry the weight of the experts' approval. Surely since Philip III., the victim of etiquette, was burned to death, because the only official who dared to move him from the fire was absent from the palace, no such foolish embroilment was ever seen.

This, then, was the position: Mr Churchill might speak as much as ever he liked, and had not the knowledge; Lord Fisher was chosen to be First Sea Lord, because he possessed the knowledge, and deemed it his duty not to open his mouth. Of course, in a contest of the tongue, experts had no chance against the politicians. As Lord Crewe says, "the political members of the Committee did too much of the talking and the expert members too little"—a view in which Lord Haldane concurred. But, indeed, it was not a matter of competition. In the race of speech the experts were not starters, and the politicians had it all their own way from the flag to the post. The experts often left the Council "with an indistinct idea of any decision having been arrived at at all," and we have no doubt that the indistinct idea was after all a true one.

Nor did the Junior Sea Lords come off any better in the race of wits. They were not permitted to give advice, asked or unasked. They were left unconsulted and uninformed.

They did not know what was going on, and it was presumed by Lord Fisher and others that they had enough to do in providing men and stores for the Fleet without putting their experience at the disposal of the laymen, who fought our battles and who risked our ships. The Third Sea Lord was once bold enough to express his opinion on the expedition to the Dardanelles, and the result did not encourage him to further efforts. His intervention, he tells us, "was not welcomed and had no effect." There were here, then, all the elements of a tragedy. An amateur, confident in his own omniscience, was the supreme head of the Navy. He was free to "gamble" as he liked, and he used that freedom, as we know. When Turkey declared war, he made his first mistake. He ordered a ten minutes' bombardment of the Dardanelles, without consulting the War Council, merely to find out, by a practical test, the effective range of the guns of the Turkish forts. He discovered the range, no doubt; he also put the Turks on the alert, and from that moment there was no possibility of surprise.

Then, on January 2, 1915, came a request from the Russians, who were hard pressed in the Caucasus, that we should make a demonstration in some other quarter against the Turks. Then it was that Mr Churchill decided upon his purely naval attack. As far as we can discover, the reticent experts were, for the most

part, strongly opposed to Mr Churchill's plan—although Mr Churchill telegraphed to Admiral Carden, who had declared his opinion that the Dardanelles could not be rushed, but "might be forced by extended operations with a large number of ships," that "high authorities here concur in your opinion." When we examine the high authorities, their concurrence is not clear. Sir Henry Jackson agreed to "an attack on the outer forts and nothing more." He thought that an attempt made by the Fleet alone to go through the Dardanelles would be "a mad thing." Commodore de Bartolomé's "impression was that the naval members would much rather have had a combined operation, and that they only agreed to a purely naval operation on the understanding that we could always draw back—that there should be no question of what is known as forcing the Dardanelles." Evident uncertainty prevailed on all sides, and the pernicious habit of silence, in which the Sea Lords had trained themselves, made it hopeless to discuss the momentous question openly or frankly. "It is impossible to read all the evidence," says the report, "or to study the voluminous papers which have been submitted to us, without being struck with the atmosphere of vagueness and want of precision which seems to have characterised the proceedings of the War Council."

Vagueness and want of precision—there you have the only gist of the matter in five

words. Thus we drifted into the purely naval attack, as presently we drifted into the big military attack, without thought or prevision. The reward of criminal recklessness was failure, and not even failure could daunt Mr Churchill's sanguine temper. He still continued to believe in the impossible, because he wished to believe in it, and he still persisted in misleading the country, in which dangerous task he was ably supported by his colleagues. We were told, again and again, that we were on the eve of such a startling victory as would effectively shorten the war. We were always on the eve: we never reached the happy morrow. Meanwhile, everything had been done which might ensure disaster. The wrong guns were used; the solemn rule that ships should not make an attack upon forts without military aid was carelessly infringed. Indeed, if it were a gamble, and it was never anything better than a gamble, it was a gamble in which the dice were clogged by the other party. And the worst of it all was, that it was undertaken in a hurry and then allowed to conduct itself. The members of the Commission have arrived at the only right conclusions, and have stated them with coldness and impartiality. "We do not consider," says their report, "that the urgency was such as to preclude a short adjournment to enable the naval and military advisers of the Government to make a thorough examination of the

question. We hold that the possibility of making a surprise amphibious attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula offered such great military and political advantages, that it was mistaken and ill-advised to sacrifice this possibility by hastily deciding to undertake a purely naval attack, which from its nature could not attain completely the objects set out in the terms of the decision." With this judgment all right-minded Englishmen will agree.

The War Council, or such members of it as were vocal, determined to make the attack in January 1915. By March the whole business had become a weariness to them. "There was no meeting of the War Council," says the report, "between March 19th and May 14th. Meanwhile important land operations were undertaken. We think that before such operations were commenced the War Council should have carefully reconsidered the whole position. In our opinion the Prime Minister ought to have summoned a meeting of the War Council for that purpose, and if not summoned, the other members of the War Council should have pressed for such a meeting. We think this was a serious omission." Indeed it was, and it shows very clearly the temper in which our amateurs approached the task, upon whose efficient performance depended the safety of the Empire.

The case of Lord Kitchener must be separately considered. It is true that he gave Mr

Churchill's plan a qualified support, because, while he acknowledged the importance to Russia of creating a diversion in Turkey, he had not any troops which he could spare for an amphibious attack. Lord Fisher, in his evidence, spoke of "the purely naval operation at the Dardanelles" as "Lord Kitchener's proposal," and, although he had given it the practical assent of his silence, condemned it in the strongest terms. The members of the Commission do not concur with Lord Fisher's view. Lord Kitchener, according to Sir Maurice Hankey, "thought the plan was worth trying. We could leave off the bombardment if it did not prove effective." This is very far different from claiming the plan as Lord Kitchener's own proposal. But let Lord Kitchener speak for himself. "When the Admiralty proposed to force the passage of the Dardanelles by means of the Fleet alone," he told the War Council on May 14, 1915, "I doubted whether the attempt would succeed, but was led to believe it possible by the First Lord's statements of the power of the *Queen Elizabeth*, . . . and regret that I was led to agree to the enterprise by the statements, particularly as to the power of the *Queen Elizabeth*, of which I had no means of judging." It is clear, then, that Lord Kitchener, not being a naval expert, succumbed to the whirlwind of Mr Churchill's unreasoning confidence, and believed that "the high authorities concurred" in the

opinion. That he was right to yield to Mr Churchill cannot be pretended, but let it be remembered that he was responsible on the War Council for the army before all, and that he did not understand that Mr Churchill spoke for himself alone.

But when we consider the part which Lord Kitchener took in this ill-omened adventure, we cannot judge him by the standard applicable to the others. He stands not on the same footing as Messrs Asquith and Churchill. He was for many years a great servant of the Empire. Messrs Asquith and Churchill were before the fall, from which they will never recover, nothing more nor less than professional politicians. We defy anybody to point to one single service which they have rendered to Great Britain in the last ten years. Their disservices have been many, and are known to all. Apart from their disastrous legislation, they have set class against class, spoiled the temper of the country, and refused to warn the people of the war which they knew was approaching. Lord Kitchener, on the other hand, spent all his force in the defence and consolidation of the Empire. In Egypt, in Africa, in India, he exercised his strength and wisdom to great ends. He had his faults, like the rest. He was masterful and impatient. A long sojourn in the East had implanted the need of autocracy so firmly in his mind that he knew not how to divide the work which

had to be done among his subordinates. He wanted to do everything himself, which in the crisis which English Radicalism had carefully prepared for us was impossible. But these are small blemishes in one who saved England, and indeed no less than that can be said of Lord Kitchener. When he was called to the War by a Prime Minister who had thought it profitable to ignore the menace of Germany, he found the country without an army, without a staff, without munitions, without any of the necessary apparatus, moral or material, for making war. He built up the whole edifice of defence from the ground. Had Lord Haldane or any other demagogue been sent to the War Office, we should long ago have been beaten in the fight. But Lord Kitchener knew what had to be done, and did his best to do it. With so heavy a weight of responsibility put upon his back, he had not the time nor the means to check the vain experiments of Mr Churchill. Think for a moment of what he was asked to do. "Lord Kitchener's position at this time," says the report, "was one of great difficulty. With the forces at his disposal he had to provide for home defence and also for maintaining an adequate force both in Flanders and Egypt. Was he to add to the demands which he had to meet the further liability of undertaking an additional military operation on a large scale in another and distant theatre of war?"

And Lord Kitchener's position was not made easier by the fact that the Government to whose aid he was called had been more willing to spend the public funds upon the purchase of votes than upon the purchase of rifles.

It was absurd, therefore, to expect of Lord Kitchener, whose hands were full of his own work, that he should hold Mr Churchill in check. That was a task for which Mr Asquith might have found time. And there is another reason why gratitude for what Lord Kitchener did should obscure the reproaches which ingenuity contrives against him. At a moment when all the sanguine demagogues, who knew nothing but their own and their constituents' wishes, were shouting that we should be in Berlin in three months, Lord Kitchener loudly and publicly prophesied a long war. It would last three years, he said, and it is likely that we shall go beyond his estimate. What might have happened had he not taken and expressed the view of a practical soldier we tremble to think. Everything would have been "as usual." It would not have seemed worth anybody's while to provide for the future. A walk-over, at the end of which we should have met the Russians *unter den Linden* would have seemed a pleasant interlude, and a marvellous impetus to the Radical voter, who would have seen his patrons win the palm without the dust. But Lord Kitchener knew better,

and he spoke with the voice of authority.

Mr Asquith and Mr Churchill deserve no lenient pity. There should be given them no pleasant loophole of escape. They have had a furtive desire to justify themselves in a public debate. Mr Asquith asked for a day and that the evidence should be published. He should himself have recognised the impossibility of publishing the evidence at this time and the inexpediency of a public discussion. When he was in office himself he was of another mind, and proclaimed it unprofitable some eight months ago to discuss the report of the Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland. As Prime Minister, he made light of the charges of cynicism and incompetence then brought against the leader of the Opposition; he would not attempt to justify him. The circumstances have not changed. It is the mind of Mr Asquith that has changed. In either case Mr Asquith was gravely incriminated. The Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland found "that the Chief Secretary was primarily responsible, as the administrative head of his Majesty's Government, for the situation that was allowed to arise and the outbreak that occurred." And Mr Asquith, being responsible for Mr Birrell, cannot but share the condemnation. So, too, with Mr Churchill and the voiceless experts; the late Prime Minister must bear his part of the blame which attaches to those who bungled the gambler's ad-

venture in the Dardanelles. In Gallipoli as in Ireland, his persistent policy of waiting to see has had the same effect, and history will hold him chargeable with the loss of thousands of lives and millions of money.

The very fact that Henry Cust left behind him so poor a monument of his gifts is a sufficient reason why his friends should do their best to rescue his gay and gracious figure from oblivion. He was of the happy few who live rather in the minds and mouths of men than on the printed page or in the memory of accomplished deeds. It was always his desire—unconscious, perhaps—to be than to do. He was no hunter after worldly success. Had he by the familiar acts of the politician attained to high office in the State, he would have found but little satisfaction in his advancement. It was not easy for him to harness his intellect to the chariot of officialism. There was as little common ambition in his nature as envy. If he had an ambition, it was the ambition of acquiring knowledge, of cultivating himself, and thus he remained a student, eager and tireless to the end. And so little was he envious that he saw his friends and contemporaries pass him in the race, with joy in their success and no hint of regret for himself.

His career seemed easy from the beginning. He was accepted as a leader of men at Eton and at Cambridge, and

when he first entered the House of Commons his progress along the well-marked road seemed assured. But they who thought that he could march through an Under-Secretaryship to some such tiresome office as the Board of Trade were disappointed. The objects of the general desire did not tempt him. He wrote verses—some of them excellent, he travelled up and down the world, he saw men and cities, and in the delight of an active life he began to understand the futility of orthodox success. So for a time his friends, knowing him imperfectly, reproached him with lack of purpose, and then in 1892 came an occasion of activity. He was asked across a dinner-table, it is said, if he could edit 'The Pall Mall Gazette.' Here was the romance of accident, which always delighted him. He knew nothing of journalism; he had never been in Fleet Street. Therefore it belonged to the fitness of things, he thought, that he should sit in an editor's chair and direct the fortunes of a great journal.

This spoilt child of Eton and Cambridge had, in truth, contributed an article here and there; he had won a restricted fame in the book of a distinguished club. But he was wholly ignorant of the persistent energy which was necessary to the production of an evening paper. It is characteristic of him that he did not hesitate. He accepted the position of editor, and asked no questions. And at the very

outset he showed a proper perception of the difficulties which lay ahead of him. A man less wise than Henry Cust would have transformed his newspaper in a day. By a prudent intuition he resolved at the outset to make no sudden change. Until he had mustered all his forces, he would not lead an open attack upon the public. And when he was ready, when he had perfected his plans, he came upon the town with a finished journal and a settled policy. It is said that at the moment the editorship was offered him he might have chosen between that or Under-Secretaryship. He chose to be editor, and was abundantly justified by the event. Nor did he take up his new post in the spirit of blind partisanship. He accepted, as in duty bound, the sound advice of Lord Salisbury, not to support the Conservative Party in all the details of its policy, but to preserve his independence, that in times of stress he might speak with the heavier weight of an impartial authority. But he was as yet an untried editor, without a staff, and he was sent, we believe, by the late Lord Burnham's happy inspiration, to take counsel with W. E. Henley. He has told the tale himself. "I came to him a perfect stranger," said he in a speech delivered at the inauguration of Henley's memorial, "and I found in an hour a friend for life, a master of difficulty and emergency, a wise, if somewhat strenuous, mentor and counsellor."

So with a staff, found with Henley's assistance, Henry Cust began the difficult duties of an editor, and it may be said at once that he impressed such a character upon his journal as no other editor of his time, save Henley himself, had been able to impress. For some three or four years 'The Pall Mall Gazette' was, mainly, an expression of Cust's own thought and talent. He had loyal and able lieutenants. But the form and shape, which the newspaper assumed during those years, was due to the influence of the editor and to none other. He possessed, in a high degree, the qualities necessary for his post. He had the gift of choosing good men, and of trusting them, when chosen. He managed his staff with the utmost tact, and made every member of it not only his helper, but his friend. It follows, then, that he got from his helpers the best work that it was in them to give. They were one and all willing to work for an enterprise, of which they are each and all an integral part. The result was that 'The Pall Mall Gazette' was always alive and alert. It was not the work of tired men, who were content to pack into an article such a nice selection of *clichés* as they thought might be acceptable. It was the work of men, who were eager above all to express whatever of truth was in them, and in this enterprise they found an ardent supporter in their editor.

Much has been said of the jocular headlines to the leaders,

of the many jests, proper to youth, which after all did not make nor mar the character of 'The Pall Mall.' What we desire to say here is that, under the rule of Henry Cust, the journal, conducted with a natural hilarity, was nevertheless committed to a definite and consistent policy both in letters and in affairs. The jests may have been used to attract the reader. Beneath them was a seriousness of purpose, a soundness of judgment, which have been too soon forgotten. However, this episode in Henry Cust's life came to a premature end, and happily was not repeated. It was, like his incursions into politics, a mere interruption of his proper activity. From the early days, when he astonished the dons and undergraduates of Cambridge with equal facility, the real medium of Henry Cust's genius was talk. To write, to edit, to speak on the hustings or in the House of Commons—these tasks were incidental to him. He was a talker born and trained. A dinner-table and a fit audience was necessary to him, as a violin was necessary to Paganini. Without them he could not give free play to the genius which burned within him. And let us not underrate the achievement of the talker. It does not get into the papers. It does not bring power or profit to him that exercises it. But more than any art, talk adds to the joyousness of the world. It is the more admirable, because it is the supreme gift of the intellectual prodigal. The

talker, indeed, incurs the envy of the foolish among his listeners more readily than he wins the admiration of the wise. And Henry Cust was the best talker of his day. He was quick, he was witty, he was daring. He gave always of his best. He was no economist, that he should count the cost of his gift. He was, as all good talkers must be, a full man. He was a reader, deep and wide; his contact with the past was quick and unbroken. He could draw upon the resources of ancient days, with the perfect consciousness that his draft would not be dishonoured. Not merely was he a classical scholar; he knew the modern literature of many tongues. So that nobody was better suited than he to illustrate, in a flash, to-day from yesterday. And he was artist enough to touch lightly whatever came under his hand. He never insisted; he never laboured his point, after the fashion of the pedants. A chance word, and he was off eagerly upon another quest. Moreover, he knew that it is not enough to talk about oneself. However entertaining the speaker may be, self is an enemy of talk. What he said to Jones, or what Jones said to him, is always immaterial, as none knew better than Henry Cust. Beyond this, everything is permissible. The staple of conversation may be gossip or pedantry, simple or elaborate, but so long as it is handled by an artist, such as Henry Cust, it is acceptable to the world. And Cust, like all

good talkers, instantly felt the sympathy of his audience. He knew by a just instinct what his friends did not want to hear, what it was, on the other hand, that delighted their ears, and thus by a delicate intuition he became a kind of power or influence wherever men and women were gathered together.

When, therefore, we attempt to define the place which Henry Cust held in the world, we must define, roughly, the place and meaning of his medium. Talk comes subtly and swiftly from a sort of sub-consciousness. In the battle of wits a man will say what he did not know nor think before. What we write is carefully sought, before it is put upon paper. What we say, if only we could contemplate it after it was said in cold blood, might seem to be an echo of strange and far-off things. And though talk is in one aspect subconscious and accidental, in another aspect it is an art. With habit the talker gradually comes to feel the impression which he wants to produce, and grows in the end a cool and tranquil master of his craft. Nor has our time seen a more highly finished artist in this kind than Henry Cust. Some men, as we have said, live in books or deeds. The most of us are sedulously engaged in building monuments to our own credit, in contriving foolish chapters, which we fondly believe will make a good appearance in some future biography. Henry Cust had none of these childish pre-occupations. He gave himself

generously and unselfishly to the day, and recked not of the future, which did not concern him. Now that he is gone, there will be less talk and less laughter in the world; fewer gay comments upon life will be handed from friend to friend; the stock of harmless pleasures will be sensibly diminished. By his intimates, then, he will be remembered as a talker, as an expert in life, as a master of these elegancies which live on rumour, and leave, alas, no stable record of themselves. And who shall say that in this stern denial of the future there do not lurk the true sacrifice, the real unselfishness?

The war stirred him, as it stirred others, to activity. For more than two years he had laboured, without intermission, at what he deemed was for the good of the country. The league, of which he was the chairman, desired at the outset to spread among neutral nations a juster, better view of England's policy and purpose. And for this enterprise Henry Cust was well fitted. He had an instinctive sympathy with men of other races than his own. There was in his nature no touch of insularity, and he talked, since the war, with Russian and with Swedes, as one who had a common interest with them. So he was led to think about

the many problems which would confront us after the war—the Empire's trade, which he thought should be resumed into the Empire's own hand, the commercial education of England, obviously imperfect, our relations with the shyest of the neutrals. But admirable as was the work which he achieved, we cannot think that in the close atmosphere of an office the real Henry Cust could breathe at his ease. Had it not been for the war he would not have breathed that atmosphere at all. And we shall still recall him at his best—talking across the table, engaging in the mimic combat of wits, declaiming not as a missionary, who hopes to convert, but as an artist, who aims at expressing himself. It is the lines on Heraclitus, indeed, hackneyed by use, unhackneyed in beauty, which come to our mind at thought of him. When we saw "the handful of grey ashes," which once were Henry Cust, put to their last resting-place, we could but recall how often he and his friends had "tired the sun with talking and sent it down the sky," we could but reflect that, so long as any one is left who saw and spoke with him, "his pleasant voices, his nightingales" will still be awake. "For time, it taketh all away, but these it cannot take."

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ENSIGN.

BY VEDETTE.

CHAPTER I.

"Fair sets the wind for France!"

THIS story, like so many others in England's military history, opens at Waterloo Station. We shall abridge the formalities of introducing its central figure, for he can only claim attention in connection with certain military events in which he played a diminutive rôle. Indeed, save for the fact that he is wearing the service uniform of one of the Guards' regiments, there is nothing to distinguish him from the thousands of other second lieutenants, insignificant even as he, whose share in shaping the destinies of the world on the battlefields of France and Belgium has likewise begun at one or other of the great London termini.

Here, then, is our Ensign—a colloquial phrase for referring to a second lieutenant of the Guards, for the title was dropped many years ago—in company with a brother ensign, his fellow-traveller, known to the ante-room at home as "The Lad," and, like the other, for the first time "proceeding on active service." They are going out alone—that is to say, not as part of a draft—and beyond the known fact that they are bound for the Guards' Base Dépôt in France, what military writers call "the fog of war" envelopes their future.

"Thank goodness, we're not conducting a draft!"

Thus our Ensign, as he stood on the platform at Waterloo, to his fellow-traveller, indicating with a jerk of his head a flushed and heated youth, heavily laden with pack and equipment, who was chivvying a party of men to the train.

"Probably we should get up to the Front quicker if we were!" replied his companion gloomily. Waking and sleeping, The Lad was haunted by the fear that the war would be over before he could get into the firing line.

"We shall get there quick enough, don't you worry!" replied the other; "there's something happening in France. I was at Broadstairs yesterday, and we heard the guns all day!"

For this was in those summer days of 1916, when even in Kent the air throbbed to the unending tremulo of the guns playing the overture to the battle of the Somme.

It was a beautiful morning—a Saturday—and the train was very crowded. The two officers started their journey under the most favourable auspices. On returning to their compartment of the train, after purchasing papers

at the bookstall, our Ensign found a bearded cleric seated upon his Wolseley valise on the floor of the carriage, for every seat was taken. The Lad and our young friend made room for the ecclesiastic upon the seat between them, and in the conversation which ensued The Lad identified the stranger as a Bishop travelling down to Winchester to see a school cricket match.

"In this heat," said The Lad to our Ensign, after taking leave of the Bishop at Winchester, "he must have mentally blessed us for coming to his rescue, so I think we've made a pretty good start!"

At the port of embarkation, which the Censor will hardly let me name, a timely hint recurred to them as they drove down to the docks in an ancient fly. The advice had been offered by a veteran of Mons and Ypres.

"Don't go on board the transport too early," this authority had said, "or the M.L.O. or one of those fellows will rope you in for the job of O.C. troops going across. They generally pick on somebody who is not conducting a draft!" So the two young officers, having ascertained that the transport would not sail till the late afternoon, dumped their kits on the quayside and fled back to the town for lunch. Cold beef and pickles and very stale bread and tired butter laid out on a stained table-cloth, in a depressing atmosphere of faded victuals, amid red wall-paper, whisky

advertisements, and dyed grasses — truly we English love to soften the pangs of parting from our native shores! Nevertheless the travelling companions made an excellent luncheon, and even professed to recognise feminine allurements in the dingy slattern who served them.

The transport which was to take them to France was not a prison hulk such as bore young Colonel Wesley to his first taste of active service on the West Indies expedition, nor was she verminous like the coffin ships that conveyed the Guards to Malta in '54; but when it is noted that she was clean, nothing remains to be said. There were a few bunks for officers below; but these were appropriated by the early comers. Everybody else, officers and men, sprawled about on the decks and in the bare, open spaces made by clearing out the first and second class saloons—for, in her youth, the transport had been a passenger steamer.

The ship was very crowded. On board were big drafts of the King's Royal Rifles, with their black cross badges, of London Territorials, and of Irish Rifles and Irish Fusiliers, a fine rowdy lot of Irishmen these two last, as well as some yeomanry and various oddments coming back from leave. Our Ensign, who possessed to some extent the faculty of observation, noticed that the leave men did not seem to return to the prospect before them with that blitheness of

heart of which the lady war writers tell us. On the other hand, the men were by no means gloomy. They just sat about on their packs and smoked their fags and chatted about the good time they had had in Blighty, and cracked a little joke or two about the life to which they were going back.

Our two young Guardsmen walked the upper deck until the transport was well out in the open sea. Then the prostration became so general that progress was a sort of egg-dance. So they turned their steps towards the stairs leading to the lower deck, where they ran into a Grenadier subaltern. They stopped and chatted. He was going back from leave. They told him they were going to the Base.

"Do you think they'll keep us there long?" asked The Lad hastily.

"Can't say," answered the other; "things are pretty quiet up Ypres way."

Then they talked about the amenities of life in the Salient, and about mutual acquaintances out in France with the Guards' Division and in the Brigade at home.

"I believe there's some kind of restaurant place on board for officers," suddenly remarked the Grenadier; "suppose we go and have something to eat!"

They found a tiny place, literally crammed to the narrow door with officers, packed as tight as herrings in a barrel, round several small tables, the

napery of which showed signs of the tossing of the vessel and the rough-and-scramble of the accommodation. Fortunately some one there espied a submarine through the porthole, and in the ensuing rush for the deck the three officers managed to wedge themselves in at a table. Here, in the course of time, they received successively from the hands of the perspiring stewards a piece of cold beef, a sardine in a saucer, a loaf of bread, considerably damaged, a knife, a spoon, a teapot full of very hot and very strong tea, and a plate. With these ingredients they contrived to make a very fair supper on the co-operative system.

After that the trioparted company, and our Ensign and The Lad, after much scrambling over prostrate forms, found an empty boat into which they clambered, and slept comfortably till daylight.

Our Ensign awoke to find The Lad shaking him. The rising sun was daubing the wide stretch of sky with a grand splash of colour. The transport was lying alongside a quay where lines of khaki figures were forming up on the greasy planking among cranes, gangways, and stacks of packing-cases.

"Listen!" said The Lad in a reverent voice.

But our Ensign had already heard it—that steady throb of distant cannon, an incessant pounding, as it seemed, upon the roof of the sky.

The guns of the Somme!

An officer, the snout of a megaphone to his face, was bawling orders.

"All leave men to come ashore at once. The remainder stay on board!" he boomed from the quayside.

"H—ll!" exclaimed The Lad in a tone which suggested that peace might be declared before they could disembark.

"H—ll!" echoed his companion.

Then they went and searched the vessel for breakfast. A Coldstream sergeant, whom The Lad had met on a bombing course somewhere at home, meeting them, volunteered the information that hot cocoa was going in the cook's galley. There, sure enough, our heroes found two grimy-looking privates in their shirt-sleeves presiding over dixies of some dark and scalding liquid. The procedure was simple. You grabbed a mug from somebody who had finished—officers and men were all mixed up together in that little place—and had as many dips as you could contrive in the scrub. Hot cocoa in the chilly dawn is nectar.

Soon afterwards the traveling companions landed, and a very friendly M.L.O. abbreviated formalities for them and indicated an hotel where breakfast and a bath might be obtained before they went on to the Guards' Base Dépôt, the intermediate stage on their journey towards the Front.

The air still vibrated to the throb of distant gun-fire. The whole town was throbbing

in sympathy. The morning *communiqué* was full of the story of the British successes on the Somme, with a long tale of prisoners and guns captured. People stood about the docks and at street corners in the bright sunshine discussing the great news. At the barber's where they were shaved, at the hotel where they bathed and breakfasted, the new-comers heard little else save enthusiastic comments on the British advance.

Later in the day our Ensign and The Lad found themselves staring wide-eyed at a broad stretch of hillside, covered, as far as the eye could see, with a vast and mighty camp—a sea of tents and huts and sheds all astir with life.

Here, presently, they reported at an office in company with a throng of officers from every arm of the service, and were directed to proceed to the portion of the camp set apart for the Guards' Division. A long, well-kept road, fringed on either side with tents and huts of all descriptions, led them through a series of camps, past orderly-rooms and guard-rooms and cinema sheds and Y.M.C.A. huts and church tents, with little gardens and regimental crests worked in white and black stones, to a low slope, dotted with huts and sheds and bell-tents in orderly rows, with a well-known flag floating from a flagstaff on the roof of a long low building.

A white star on a red and blue ground—it was the Brigade flag.

CHAPTER II.

"And look . . . a thousand Blossoms with the Day
Woke . . . and a thousand scattered into clay."

—OMAR KHAYYÂM.

Within the confines of that camp within a camp, the young officers found themselves at once at home.

In the long pavilion over which floated the Brigade flag, our Ensign and The Lad found the Officers' Mess — a long dining-room and an ante-room, with bright curtains and basket-chairs, and a bridge-table or two, and the latest papers — rather like a golf pavilion. On the white distemper of the wall some one with an artist's hand had executed a few hasty sketches of the Guards in their uniforms of peace time — an officer in overalls, a private in white fatigue jacket.

In the Mess the new-comers found assembled officers from every regiment in the Brigade — youngsters who had just come out from home, veterans returning to the Front for the second or third time, officers passed for light duty acting as instructors at the great training-ground where drafts of all arms waiting at the Dépôt underwent a further period of training before being sent up to the firing line. Here our Ensign was joyously hailed by officers of his own regiment, who gave him the latest news from the Front. Here, too, he experienced that first unforgettable shock — he learnt of the death of a

brother officer, one who had been his friend, killed in the trenches that very morning.

Along one corner of the little "square," white bell-tents were pitched in neat array. In these were quartered men from every regiment in the Brigade of Guards, waiting their turn to be drafted into the firing line. The long stretch of canvas on the hillside, surrounded on every side by similar lines of tents stretching far away into the distance, reminded our Ensign of an old photograph he had seen somewhere of the Guards' camp at Scutari in '54, then, as now, hemmed in all round by the camps of other Brigades.

The camp was the picture of neatness. The well-metalled road traversing it was kept scrupulously clean. The officers were quartered in a little colony of square Armstrong huts, with canvas sides and timber flooring, set up in mathematically precise rows across from the Mess at the foot of a delightful little garden, laid out behind rustic fencing enclosing a Badminton court. The officers' huts were gay with coloured prints cut out of 'La Vie Parisienne' and 'The Sketch,' the little gardens bright with flowers, the natty paths carefully swept. In short, the whole

place was the perfection of order.

Life at the Guards' *Depôt* in France differed from life with the Guards at home to this extent, that, instead of having their drills on the "square," the men were marched up daily to the common training-ground, situated on a plateau overlooking the camp. Each day one or two officers per regiment were detailed for the uncongenial duty of marching the men of their regiment up the dusty winding hill to the training-ground, one of the pipers of the Scots Guards at their head. The other officers, save the *Picquet* (or *Orderly*) Officer who had his round of duties at the camp to attend to, took a short cut to the ground, involving a brief but precipitous climb up a steep hillside.

Our Ensign still carries in his memory a picture of the training-ground as he saw it on that first hot morning. It was a spectacle so overwhelming that it drove from his mind for the moment all the impressions he had been absorbing during his months of training with the Guards. As he gazed at the vast panorama of the plateau, he felt his heart throb in answer to the patriotic appeal of that picture of Britain in arms. For, from all sides and by every road, he saw dense columns of men converging on a great central parade-ground. With brass band, with drums and fifes, or with pipes and drums at their head, the thick brown columns poured in by every approach,

the men in full marching order, their rifles slung, the sweat trickling down their sun-burnt faces from their climb up the steep ascent. Cockneys, men of Kent, men of the Midlands, and men of the West country, "Geordies," Lowlanders and Highlanders, Catholics and Orangemen, Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians . . . all were there. You could almost hear the pulse of Empire beat as they swarmed in their thousands on to the parade-ground.

Undulating ripples ran here and there along the close ranks of that vast host as company after company ordered arms and stood at ease. Commands were shouted: instructors, with yellow arm-bands on their sleeves, ran hither and thither in the press. Still that endless stream of khaki deluged forth on to the parade-ground: still the blare of brass, the squeal of fifes, or the skirl of pipes proclaimed the coming of fresh legions along the roads of the camp.

"Take a good look at that picture!" said a captain of the Coldstream at our Ensign's elbow, "for you've never seen so many British soldiers together before!"

Our Ensign nodded. Truly that place of assembly was an unforgettable sight, a picture that he knew would never fade from his mind.

The Guards' officers, our Ensign learnt, were to accompany the men of their regiments to the different courses of instruction given at the training-ground — bayonet-fighting,

wiring, bombing, and so forth—under instructors trained in the firing line. Thus he and The Lad presently found themselves listening to a sun-browned sergeant of the H.L.I., whose bonnet looked somewhat incongruous worn with "shorts," expounding in the accents of "Glasgie" the whole art of laying out barbed-wire entanglements. While his men were busy with the prickly rolls of wire, stakes, pickets, and mallet, our Ensign heard French being spoken behind him.

He turned and saw a detachment of Canadians, thick-set, sturdy, and rather swarthy for the most part, drawn up in front of another "wire lecturer" a dozen yards away. By the instructor's side stood a Canadian soldier, a corporal, who, as the lecturer proceeded, translated his remarks rapidly into French.

It was rather an extraordinary performance. The lecturer was a Cookney.

"You tike the stike, . . ." said the lecturer, suiting the action to the word.

"Alors, vous prenez la broche . . . comme ça," fluently translated the interpreter, adding shrilly—

"Mais faites donc attention, nom de Dieu, vous, Le Sage!"

" . . . you measure orf five yards, like this 'ere. . . "

"Et puis, vous mesurez cinq aunes . . . au pas n'est-ce pas?"

Listening with wondering ears, our Ensign realised the strength of the Empire tie that had sent these French Canadians, who could not

speak our language, across the seas to war.

It was a scene of amazing activity, that training-ground. The brisk breeze that blew joyfully across the sun-bathed plateau brought with it the sounds and smells of a great fair, fitful bursts of music, bugle-calls, shouts and cries, the pungent odour of horses, the acrid taste of dust, the faint scent of burning wood.

One day a long train of German prisoners wound its melancholy way through the camp *en route* for England. Our Ensign stood by the roadside as they passed and noted how the indifference faded from the faces of the officers at the head of the *cortège*, how the weary and mud-stained figures behind them shook themselves free from their apathy at the scene of busy movement enacted all around them. The columns marching along the roads, the charging lines of bayonet-fighters, the endless lines of practice trenches, the bustle, the orderly confusion, the noise . . . all this must have made them realise the giant strength piling up behind the fierce onslaught before which they had laid down their arms on the Somme. The sad procession passed our Ensign by with the dawn of a great enlightenment in the eyes of the prisoners.

The forcefulness of the training at the camp was amazing. Men who had got a little stale in long months of training at some pleasant centre at home were shaken up into life by the galvanising vigour of the

instructors' addresses. There was one sergeant in particular, an instructor in bayonet fighting, to whom our young man never tired of listening.

That sergeant was magnificently built, with the finely developed physique of the army gymnastic instructor. He was simply attired in a vest, khaki trousers and gym shoes, his short-sleeved jumper leaving open to view a brawny and sunburnt pair of arms that wielded rifle and bayonet as easily as though they were a swagger-cane.

He was a fine picture of British manhood, that sergeant, as he stood bareheaded in the sunshine on the parapet of a trench. Behind him dangled from a long gibbet the sacks of straw upon which presently the budding warrior would test his skill with the bayonet; before him, a sea of sunburnt faces, a wide horse-shoe of capless, jacketless men, sleeves rolled up, rifle and bayonet in their hand. In fluent direct English he would harangue his audience somewhat after this style:

"Now then, lads, just you listen to me for a bit. You all know what you joined the Army for. You didn't join just to learn a bit of arm-drill, nor yet to polish your buttons and look pretty, nor yet to go out walking with a pack o' gals . . . yes, I can see a lot of you know all about that too. No! you joined the army *to fight!* That's what they've brought you out here for! *To fight, to kill Germans,* . . . that's your job out here.

You've left the gals and the pictures and the pubs behind in England. This here is WAR! D'you know what WAR means? I'll tell you. War means that if you don't kill the other feller first, he'll blooming well kill YOU! Now just you get that into your thick heads!

"Listen here again! This little friend here" (patting the bayonet), "this little friend o' mine on my arm . . . some of you lads have had plenty of little friends on your arms in your time; I can see that with half an eye, . . . this little sticker here is going to help you to get back home alive to the gals and the pictures and all the rest of it. Shells are all right, the rifle's all right, but it's what's on the end of the rifle that's going to save your life when it's man to man in a stand-up fight.

"When a great hulking Hun sees one of you chaps coming for him close in with the bayonet, what does he do? Does he send a messenger with his compliments to Fritz at the battery behind him and ask him, please, for a barrage? Does he lower his sights and take careful aim with his rifle? Not on your life. For why? Because there isn't time. The old Hun blooming well knows that if he don't stick YOU, you'll stick HIM!

"Now you've learnt your bayonet practice, and I could teach you here by the book, so that you'd do it all so pretty you'd make a Guards-

man blush. But I can't teach you quickness: I can't put the ginger into you so as you'll go hell for leather for the Huns first time you see them, and through them and their blooming trench before they can say 'Potsdam.' You don't want to use your brains, you don't want to reason it all out nicely; *you've all, every one of you, got to be the man that sticks first!*

"There's lots of fellers been out here who thought they'd take it easy, and trot up to Fritz and give him a gentle prod and watch him surrender. Do you know where most of those fellers are, lads? Under the ground, that's where they are, with a nice little wooden cross, and a bit of writing atop to say what fine chaps they were. Ah! a dead man's always a hero. But you don't want to be dead, lads! A wooden cross is not the sort of cross you've come out here after. You want to live, and go home to the gals and tell 'em all what a hero you are.

"Now we'll try a little bit of assaulting . . ."

Thus, he would run on, the very incarnation of the soldier spirit, erect and manly, the sunshine playing round his light-brown hair, and the polished steel of his "little friend."

Despite the manifold interests of the training-ground, time hung rather heavy on the hands of our young man. Every day the very firmament quivered to the distant thunder of the guns; sometimes in the night, particularly towards

dawn, the throbbing of the air was so marked as to awaken the officers in their airy huts. There is something uncontrollably unsettling about gun fire. It upset our young man sadly, and he chafed at his detention at the base. As for The Lad, he positively raged.

Sometimes our Ensign marched the party for the training-ground up the hill behind the piper, with his kilt of Royal Stuart tartan. Notwithstanding the dusty climb, our Ensign rather liked these marches up the hill and back. The weather was beautifully fine, and the men were always in excellent fettle, so laughter and chaff flew from mouth to mouth. Nothing sharpens wits so well as throwing a few battalions of different regiments together. The humour was generally pointed, but often decidedly witty, and the jokes were always taken in good part. One morning the young officer, plodding along in the dust at the head of the training-ground party, heard a voice behind him exclaim—

"Eyes right to the Welsh Guards, lads!"

The officer instinctively glanced to the right, and saw a gentle nanny-goat gazing sad-eyed from behind the hedge at the column as it passed. This sally at the expense of the regimental pet of the Welsh Guards elicited roars of laughter, in which—in justice, be it said—the Welshmen of the party also joined.

Thus the summer days rolled on, and with every day our Ensign grew browner and

fitter for the fray. One evening at the bridge-table the Adjutant of the Guards' Base Depôt, after opening a message brought in by an orderly, said to our Ensign who was his partner—

"You're for the Guards Division to-morrow evening, and," turning round to The Lad who was writing a letter at the window behind him, "you too!"

That night the two young officers went to bed with a joyful heart. To-morrow they were going to the Front.

The guns of the Somme are throbbing more frantically than ever. Time flies: time presses sorely when the blood runs hotly in the veins. Let us hasten, then, over the ceremony of departure, and pause but for a moment to watch the group at the door of the Mess waving a last farewell to the two figures, girt on with all the panoply of war, stalking into the mellow dusk of a perfect summer evening down the road to the Camp Commandant's office, where a motor-lorry is waiting to take them to the train.

"Now we shan't be long!" murmured The Lad as the lorry whirled them away through the white dust. He spoke true. Ere three months had run their course that eager spirit was swallowed up and lost in the mirk and reek of those very guns to whose summons he had so impatiently listened.

It was The Lad who did

the trick that secured our young friends a compartment to themselves through both stages of their long journey up to the Front. In the gloomy yard in which their train—of prodigious length, it seemed to be—was drawn up The Lad produced a piece of chalk from his pocket.

"Watch me!" he said with his merry smile.

On the door of the first-class coupé which they had selected for themselves he wrote in chalk—

"O.C. Troops."

"Infallible!" replied The Lad to his sceptical companion. "A fellow I met at the machine-gun course at Chelsea put me up to the dodge. It scares 'em all away. You see? We shan't be disturbed!"

Nor were they, though at various times before the train started heavily laden young officers approached the carriage. At the sight of that forbidding inscription, however, they bolted precipitately. And so our young friends journeyed through the night in much comfort to the old French town where they were to change trains and spend the day.

After a shave, a bath, and breakfast, they set out together on a pious pilgrimage to the grave of a friend who for a twelvemonth had lain buried in the British Military Cemetery beyond the race-course on the outskirts of the city. Without difficulty they found the simple grave at the foot of its big white cross,

with many newer and whiter crosses all around. After consultation with the Corporal Gardener, a First-Gravedigger kind of person with lugubrious mien and Yorkshire accent, they purchased from a genial Frenchwoman at the lodge of the cemetery a number of plants to be put on the grave.

"A'll tell 'er A'll put un in!" said the Corporal Gardener, and, raising his voice to a shout, he bawled at the woman—

"Moa . . . fleurs . . . tombe . . . arpray!"

"Vous allez les planter vous-même?" replied the woman with perfect comprehension—"bon, bon."

And thus, our Ensign reflected, a British graveyard forms a tiny link in the chain of the Entente to bring Normandy and the East Riding together.

After that came an interminable railway journey lasting from after luncheon that day until far into the next afternoon. But for a tiny break *en route* it would have passed altogether out of our Ensign's mind, that snail-like progress from Normandy to Belgium. Somewhere about the hour of 7 in the morning the long

train halted in what seemed to be a tract of flat and barren country. Alighting, our heroes found themselves opposite a long low shed with open doors, giving a glimpse of gleaming urns and piles of bread and butter, towards which everybody in the train seemed to be flocking. Behind this wayside canteen our travellers found a small and cheery room, with a bright red-tiled floor, natty curtains, and old-fashioned furniture, where two or three ladies were dispensing breakfast to the officers. In comparison with the boon of breakfast in that barren place, after a long, cold night journey, the charges were outrageously low. But better than the steaming tea, the delicious sandwiches, the tempting fruit, was that little glimpse of England, the pretty English room, the warm welcome of those devoted Englishwomen in their pleasant English voices.

Nothing more happened to break the tedium of their journey until actually they had set foot to the ground on alighting at their destination.

At that moment, the ears of our heroes were affrighted by a sound, the like of which neither had ever heard before.

CHAPTER III.

Whee . . . ee . . . ee . . . oo . . . oo . . . PLUNK!

A rushing noise as of great wings beating the air, a reverberating crash, like the slamming of an iron door,

blended with the sound of jangling glass, of splintering wood; then an unfamiliar, high-pitched cry, "A . . . ah!" followed by a mechanical chant on a rising key,

as it passed from mouth to mouth—

“Stretcher-bearer!”

The platform of the station was deserted. A very familiar name stared down upon our heroes from the lamps. Their fellow-travellers by the train . . . a handful of all sorts, officers, Australian privates, some R.A.M.C. orderlies, a couple of Belgian interpreters . . . had long since vanished into safety.

The sky seemed full of odd noises. Every minute or so the new arrivals heard the long-drawn-out whistle of a shell, cut short on its rising note by the crash of the explosion. The first shell they had heard had seemed to strike very close at hand: the succeeding crashes, though equally loud, appeared to be farther away.

Everybody knows the sound of a shell, even when he hears it for the first time. Concerned mainly with the fear lest the other should notice that he “had the wind up,” our two young Guardsmen hastily pulled their kits out of the train, and leaving them where they fell on the platform, made for the station-hall.

There they saw two men on their knees beside a stretcher. To the right of them a notice painted in white on a black-board announced the office of the R.T.O. or Railway Transport Officer, where our young men had to report.

In the R.T.O.’s office, installed in what had probably been a lamp-room or some-

thing of the sort, they found most of their fellow-passengers assembled. Under the influence of their original welcome, everybody was conversing in whispers.

The R.T.O. was shortish in his manner. (It is not easy to be polite under shell fire.)

“Report at Headquarters of Guards’ Division!” he said curtly to our Ensign and his companion when they had given in their names and regiment.

“Where is that?” said our Ensign promptly.

Resignedly the officer explained. Yes, it was a goodish way; no, there was no conveyance of any kind; yes, they would have to go through the town; no, it was not safe; the town was being shelled. Had they not heard the shell fall outside the station a minute ago?

“Next! Australian Light Horse?”

The R.T.O. turned to the next man.

“We’ll just have to foot it,” said our hero to The Lad as they made their way outside, “unless we can get a lift of some kind. We’d better leave our kits here in charge of some one!”

Outside in the station-hall our Ensign heard a stamp and a click beside him, a familiar sound, the sound of a Guardsman saluting. Our Ensign turned and saw a private in breeches and spurs, a well-known crest in his cap, an old sleeveless rain-coat flying out behind him like a pair of wings.

"I have a horse for you, sir," he said, "to take you up to the transport. I couldn't get here before on account of the shelling."

Our Ensign and The Lad were going to different battalions. The moment of parting had come.

"Your mess-cart has come for you, sir," said the groom to The Lad, "but the driver waited outside until the shelling had stopped. If you will come along with my officer, I can show you where I left him."

On a long country road lined by tall poplars our Ensign found a couple of horses and a little Maltese cart. He and The Lad shook hands; the latter climbed into the cart, while our Ensign mounted a small brown mare. Then the cart rattled off towards the centre of the town, while our Ensign trotted down the road, the groom behind him.

Presently our young man drew rein to allow the groom to come up level. The Ensign began to talk to the soldier.

"They," said the groom, with a jerk of his head in the direction which the mess-cart had taken, "are in rest, sir. Our Battalion is in the line. The Transport Officer thought you would dine with the Transport, and then go up along of him and the rations after dark to-night."

The groom was a veteran of the original Expeditionary Force. So was the little mare which our Ensign was riding, the man told him.

"Many's the fine officer that

little mare's carried, sir," he said, scanning her affectionately: "there was Captain X., him as was killed back at Soupeers, and Captain Y.—it was on the Zillebeke Ridge where he got it, sir—and Captain Z., him as was shot by a sniper in the trenches at Givenchy. Ah! I've seen some grand gentlemen go, sir!"

He shook his head mournfully.

"Maybe you'll want this little switch of mine, sir," the groom added, handing our Ensign a small ash plant; "one or two draws o' this won't be after hurting that little mare, she's that idle!"

Our Ensign welcomed this change in the conversation. The groom's train of thought made him slightly uncomfortable in the circumstances.

For a mile or so along the road out of the town the noises still resounded from the sky. The shells came "whooshing" over so loudly above their heads that our Ensign felt an irrepressible titillation in the neck—a strong inclination to duck. To distract his thoughts, he looked about him.

It was a flat and uninteresting country, but well wooded and very green. Every house they passed was wrecked by shell fire, more or less completely; but he noticed that there were still some civilians about. Practically all the soldiers they met, he observed, were Guardsmen, and, though their cap-stars and buttons were dull and unpolished, their uniforms stained and

often badly worn, the men were all well shaved and well brushed, with puttees neatly tied and boots well greased. They were taking their ease in the cool of the evening, standing gossiping in the streets of the villages through which our Ensign passed, or sitting on the benches outside the estaminets.

A ride of more than an hour brought our hero and the groom to a muddy side-track which led into a pleasant green field. Here a number of tents were pitched. From a field in rear, a prodigious squealing of fifes and beating of drums resounded in a hopeless cacophony. "The Drums" (by which generic term, in the Guards, the fife and drum band is understood) of two battalions were practising in separate groups under the trees.

The Transport Officer and the Quartermaster made our Ensign welcome in the mess-tent, gave him a drink and a cigarette, informed him that he was to dine with them, and eventually showed him into the Interpreter's tent, where our hero was much astonished to find his kit lying. It had apparently been wafted there by some supernatural means from the platform at the railway station. This was, of course, the Quartermaster's doing, but our Ensign was as yet too ignorant of usages in the field to appreciate that heaven-sent boon, a good Quartermaster. So he accepted it all as a matter of course, and pro-

ceeded to change his clothes and don warmer things in anticipation of his first night in the trenches.

The Belgian interpreter was sitting on the bed in his tent, warbling a little air to himself. After our Ensign had disabused him of his first impression—namely, that the new-comer proposed to take forcible occupation of his sleeping apartment—he became extremely affable, and produced water and soap and a towel. He was a sunny-natured person with remarkable fluency in English, and made the young officer free of his every possession with unbounded hospitality.

Then our Ensign dined in the mess-tent off an enamel plate, and drank innocuous Belgian beer out of a tin mug. A captain of the Coldstream, who turned out to be the Transport Officer of his battalion, dined with the party. Outside the daylight was failing and a few pale stars had begun to twinkle. The drums had ceased their practice, but the crickets and the frogs supplied the table-music in their place.

"I hope you can ride," said the Transport Officer to our Ensign, with a note of warning in his voice.

Our Ensign pleaded guilty to a slight familiarity with that gentlemanly accomplishment.

"... because," the Transport Officer went on, "we have a good eight miles to go, and the limbers with the rations started an hour ago.

So we shall have to ride fairly hard for the first part of the way to catch 'em up."

Our Ensign smiled in a superior fashion, as much as to say the other could not ride hard enough for *him*. "Unconscious of his doom, the little victim plays!" Our young man was to have a rude awakening.

By the time the groom had announced that the horses were waiting, our Ensign was ready for the road. He had to carry on his person his whole panoply of war—revolver, glasses, compass, gas-helmet, ammunition pouch, and lamp—all slung on his belt, which he was wearing outside his rain-coat. He felt like a trussed fowl, and it required a helping hand from the groom to get him into the saddle. When he was up, the Quartermaster handed him a steel helmet, which the groom slung on the saddle for him. Then the Transport Officer led the way out along the muddy side-track on to a better road, and immediately spurred his powerful horse into a fast trot.

Several thoughts passed through our Ensign's mind in rapid succession. The first was that, if he did not shake "The Fat Lady" (for such was the mare's name) out of her contented amble, he would be left behind in the dark, and irretrievably lost. The second was that, if he went any faster, he must certainly part company with one or other article of his equipment, which was dancioing a merry jig round his waist. The third was that he would take an early oppor-

tunity of verifying a suspicion which had crossed his mind at dinner, from certain allusions in the conversation—namely, that the Transport Officer man had acquired his familiarity with horses in the hunting-field in Ireland!

Our young man had retained the ash plant, and, under the influence of half a dozen "dhraws" applied to her flanks at regular intervals, the mare bestirred herself, albeit protesting.

Thus our Ensign rode forth unto battle, in the Ethiopian blackness of a close muggy night, sorely shaken, jingling like a jester, drenched with perspiration, with a feverish eye on the dim figure of the rider jogging briskly through the darkness ahead of him.

Far away in the distance, vivid white lights spouted continually into the sky. Of gun fire there was little. It seemed a quiet night. By the roadside, from time to time, the jagged silhouette of a broken wall, a tottering chimney, a devastated church tower, stood out against a patch of lighter cloud. Figures took shape suddenly out of the gloom, marching in silence through the night, filling the empty road with the acrid smell of hot and dirty men, filling the air with the crunch-crunch of their feet. Guns jingled past them at the trot, with cursing drivers plucking at their horses' heads to keep their teams to the road.

Presently, a continuous rumbling echoed out of the patch of blackness enveloping

the road ahead. Low voices came back with snatches of conversation. The dark outline of a long string of tossing limbers loomed out of the gloom. The Transport Officer galloped off up to the head of the column. A whistle sounded. The rumbling ceased. The limbers stopped. The Transport Officer's voice spoke out of the darkness; our Ensign could not see the speaker.

"We send our horses back here,"—our Ensign heard him spring to the ground—"better put your helmet on now! We are going to walk, and we generally get shelled to blazes over this next bit that's coming!"

Stiffly, our Ensign slipped his foot out of the stirrup and precipitated himself from the saddle. He was wondering to himself whether all wars were as uncomfortable as this one. He had only thought of death on active service as a quick finish in the midst of an exhilarating charge at the head of an excited band—not of a death that came screaming suddenly at you out of the dark, when you were clammy and stiff and tired, and generally uncomfortable!

The young man doffed his cap, and carried it in his hand. He put on his helmet. It was heavy, and hideously unwieldy. He felt it would topple over on his nose with very little provocation.

They plodded on in silence at the head of the rumbling limbers. After an hour's walk through the blackness (our Ensign had not the remotest

idea where they were), the blur of many figures sitting about the grass of the roadside bulked out in the gloom. The Transport Officer switched on his light. The familiar features of the Drill Sergeant who had initiated our hero into the intricacies of squad drill at home stood revealed in the bright beam. About him, in silent groups, were the ration parties, who, without delay or confusion, set about the work of unloading the limbers.

The night was singularly quiet. Not a gun spoke. Never a shell came to justify the Transport Officer's gloomy forebodings. Only from the higher ground ahead, the never-ceasing fountain of white lights showed that the opposing lines of trenches were unremitting in their vigilance.

Darkness not only obscures the eyes,—it also clouds the memory. The next thing our Ensign remembers was coming to what looked like a row of ancient *tumuli* in a field and a gap in a hedge which seemed to be shaken by a violent wind, though the night was perfectly still. There was a loud "swish . . . swish . . ." in the air and a quick "patter . . . patter . . ." all around. Then a voice said very distinctly out of the darkness—

"Blast that machine-gun!"

The swishing sounds ceased, our Ensign turned on his lamp and saw an officer in a Burberry with a revolver hung on his belt worn outside. The new arrival instantly recognised him as one of the most joyous spirits of the ante-room at

home. He was known to all and sundry as "Peter."

"Hullo!" said the other, switching on his light, "there you are! I didn't know if you'd be up to-night or not. I believe you're coming to our company. I suppose you are going to see the Commanding Officer now. He's in the dug-out. I'm out with a carrying party. See you later. Where the devil's that orderly gone?"

He turned off his light and was swallowed up in the dark amid a shuffling throng of men. Our Ensign found the Commanding Officer in a small dug-out with a very low entrance. Candles in white metal candlesticks threw a yellow light over a roughly carpentered table, where maps were spread out amid the remains of a meal. In the corner an officer was bending over a telephone.

"This is the Adjutant speaking," he was saying, "... oh, that is Mr Barnard ... right ... Minnies were they ... yes, it sounded like them ... not in the trench ... good ... right ... we'll get retaliation!"

"Four Minnies into No. 1 Company, sir," he said, putting down the receiver and addressing the Commanding Officer; "Barnard thinks he'd like some retaliation. Shall I ask for it?"

The Commanding Officer nodded and offered the Transport Officer and our Ensign a drink. Then he told our Ensign that he would be attached to No. 2 — Peter's company, — the latter was

commanding in the absence of the regular company commander who was on leave. The company was at present in support in trenches close at hand. The battalion was coming out of the line the next night. Then they talked of the general situation, the advance on the Somme, the situation in the Salient, what the Russians were doing, whether the Rumanians would come in. Finally, our Ensign took his leave, and the Transport Officer escorted him along the trench to a small and extremely evil-smelling dug-out, where they found a Grenadier subaltern working out chess-problems on a travelling chess-board, by the light of a candle stuck in its own grease on the table. He explained to the Transport Officer that he was in command of two platoons left behind to help with the carrying work at night.

That night our Ensign slept in a low narrow hole, scraped out of the parados of the trench. On turning in, he found that his servant, whom he had brought up with him from the Base, had spread the dug-out with nice clean sand-bags. With his haversack for a pillow, and his rain-coat spread over him as a wrap, the new-comer, who had never spent a night out of bed in his life before, slept solidly for eight hours. When he awoke the trenches were flooded with sunshine, and a most comforting smell of hot bacon stole across the clear morning air.

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The company was not in the firing line, so that the men could move pretty freely in and about the trenches. The weather was very fine and warm, and the existence was not strenuous. The following evening Peter marched half the company away into reserve, on relief by another battalion, leaving our Ensign behind, with two platoons to help with the carrying. In two days' time our hero would rejoin his battalion in reserve.

The new arrivals in the company Mess in the dirty little dug-out were genial souls. Our Ensign took his meals and played chess with them, and discussed the papers which came up with the utmost regularity in company with the letters every afternoon. After dark our young man slung his lamp and his revolver on his belt and went round the trenches and the outposts, his orderly at his heels, a Celtic type of youth, Mac-Finnigan by name.

The two days passed pleasantly enough. There was a little sporadic shelling, generally after the passage of a Hun aeroplane, glittering aloft, with black crosses on the under-surface of its planes, amid little puffs of shrapnel and the "peugh . . . peugh . . . peugh" of the anti-aircraft guns. The first afternoon—it was at tea—two sharp salvoes of whizz-bangs rang out from farther up the trench. Our Ensign sallied forth to review the situation. Up the trench he found a big Grena-

dier lying on his face motionless in a great welter of blood, while round the traverse an Irish Guardsman was flat on his back on the trench-boards, a little rosary between his fingers, with a stretcher-bearer ripping up one of his puttees, which was soaked with blood.

The wounded man lifted a pallid face to the officer as he came up. The stretcher-bearer was soothing him gently as he worked.

"Be asy now," he was saying, "a little skelp like that won't kill yez. I'll put yez in the dug-out beyond . . . ye'll be grand and snug there till it's dark, and then we'll take yez down."

"The others is all right, sir," the stretcher-bearer added to our Ensign; "him round the traverse was killed on the spot, but there's nobody else touched barrin' this chap here!"

The wounded man said nothing, but his breath came heavily. His face was very pale. The officer saw him tucked away into the dug-out, and went back to tea with a heavy heart. It was his first casualty. . . .

The next night our Ensign led his two platoons out of the trenches in the wake of a guide sent up to meet them. He was a little disappointed to find how lightly his responsibility as an officer rested upon him. He had not the least idea of where they were going as they followed the guide out into the darkness.

Their journey came to its

finish on a timbered walk, leading past a long array of shelters dug out of a bank and protected by layers of neatly built-up sandbags. Everybody had gone to bed, for it was after 2 A.M.—that is, everybody save our Ensign's servant, who, after our hero had seen his men safely into their quarters, led the officer into a fine roomy dug-out with a wooden door and wooden flooring. There, on a bed made of sacking stretched over a framework, he found his sleeping-sack spread, with his pyjamas on top; his canvas washing-bucket, full of hot water, smoked on a primitive-looking washstand; while a complete change of clothes

was laid out on a soap-box beside the bed.

"And what time will I call you in the morning, sir?" said Johnson—such was the name of our Ensign's servant—at the door.

"What time is parade?" asked the officer.

"There's no parade for you, sir,—only rifle inspection at eleven. Perhaps you'd care for a bath in the morning, sir!"

Our Ensign jumped at the suggestion and ordered a hot bath for half-past nine. He crept gratefully into his sleeping-bag, his mind bewildered by the sudden contrasts in his new and remarkable life. . . .

CHAPTER IV.

The period in reserve had brought the whole battalion together once more. The companies were no longer separated as they had been in the trenches. Our Ensign found the officers established in regular messes in the sand-bagged shelters of this pleasantly rural retreat, and the whole routine of the Guards running smoothly on very similar lines to the life in barracks at home.

Life was not at all strenuous in reserve—at any rate not in the day-time. In the trenches the men get short commons in the way of sleep, so during the period in reserve they are not worked very hard. At night, however, fatigue

parties were generally sent up to the support or front lines on various digging undertakings. Otherwise, a rifle inspection in the morning, and sometimes, additionally, an inspection of feet (an army may fight on its stomach but it marches on its feet) or of gas helmets, was the only parade of the day.

Each company took it in turn to be "in waiting"—that is to say, to be in readiness for any emergency. The company in waiting furnished the guards and fatigue parties for any special jobs about the camp. During the period in waiting, which lasted twenty-four hours, from one afternoon to the afternoon of the

following day, the officers of the company in waiting were not supposed to leave the precincts of the camp, and, the company commander excepted, they took it in turns, during the period "in waiting," to act as Picquet Officer, whose functions in reserve were practically confined to stamping the letters with the battalion censor stamp in the Orderly Room (a sand-bagged shelter), before the post corporal collected the mail in the afternoons.

Our Ensign slipped very easily, almost imperceptibly, into his place as a tiny cog in the great wheelwork of the army in France. He came out prepared to have a roughish time in very congenial company—and in neither respect was he disappointed. The Mess in which he found himself had all the attraction of a cosmopolitan club in miniature. His fellow-officers in the company to which he had been posted—No. 2—had what was known as a double-company mess with the officers of No. 1 Company. At the quarters in reserve the mess was located in an ambitious sort of sand-bagged shelter, with stain-glass windows, timber floor and walls, a white deal sideboard (home-made), and a long table and chairs. Here our Ensign met his company commander, a serene and placid person, with a somewhat judicial manner, who, for that reason, answered to the name of "The Beak." Most of the other officers our Ensign had known at home,

so that he did not feel so much an intruder as he had feared he would.

The double-company mess was a very happy family. In every stratum of society type balances type. It is this easy counterpoise that makes the world revolve. That great leveller, the War, has thrown together in officers' messes for a spell of intimate association a number of men whose pursuits in other circumstances would all have radiated in different directions. In that mess there were, amongst others, a brace of budding diplomats, two Balliol undergraduates, a rancher, a "literary gent.," and an engineer. Some of the officers had decided to adopt the Army as their profession, and to remain on in the regiment after the war, but others would simply return to their pursuits and professions on the proclamation of peace. The pleasant *cameraderie* which reigned in the double company mess must be based, our Ensign decided, on the equilibrium of all these different temperaments and mental outlooks balanced one against the other. So far as regimental duties were concerned, every type was tempered down to the average consistency given by the identical training which every Guards' officer receives on the square at home.

Therefore, though many and furious were the arguments on every conceivable topic with which the young lions of the double-company mess whiled

away their leisure hours, there was perfect accord in the general realisation by each of his duties and responsibilities as an officer. In the privacy of the mess there might be heated wrangles regarding the respective merits of No. 1 and No. 2 Companies; but the whole mess presented a solid front in backing the two companies against the rest of the battalion, the battalion against the rest of the Brigade, and the regiment against every other regiment in the Brigade of Guards.

Our Ensign had two or three spells in reserve at this peaceful spot, and always looked forward to returning to it after the battalion's turn of duty in the trenches. There was practically no shelling; any German shells that came over mostly fell in a more exposed position several hundred yards away. All around them lay spread out the fair garb in which summer dresses the Belgian countryside, and not even the ruined farms or the shell-scored roads could detract from the beauty of the poppies and corn-flowers running wild among the neglected fields, or the roses and the hollyhocks and the snapdragon that bloomed in the little gardens of the ravaged farms.

The men revelled in the snatch of quiet, in the pleasant surroundings, in the beautiful summer weather. When their day's work was done they sat about in the shade, writing letters home, reading the

newspapers, or idly watching the afternoon spectacle of German *v.* British aeroplanes. Some spent every moment of their leisure in dragging one of the canals in which Belgium abounds for fish. The dragnet was a marvel of ingenuity, constructed as it was out of rabbit netting, barbed wire, bits of string, sandbags, and branches, towed along by eager hands on either bank. Incredible as it may seem, the fishermen made quite respectable catches of pike and eels, which they cooked for supper over wood-fires, and consumed with relish,—all heedless of dark allusions by their less enterprising comrades to the fabled discovery of portions of a German helmet in the maw of one of these aquarian monsters.

The officers went for walks in the neighbourhood, extending their rambles, with the perversity of youth, to the ruined city of Ypres, still the shell-trap *par excellence* of the countryside for miles around. One afternoon, a subaltern in our Ensign's mess who went by the name of Apollo, from his statuesque appearance, and who was a perfect Baedeker of information about the local attractions wherever the battalion went, took Peter and our Ensign and one of the Balliol men, known as The Don, to a certain field where, among various shell-holes and felled apple-trees, a few rows of depressed currant bushes yet lingered. The currants were red and scanty and abominably

sour, and an unusually large number of "dud" shells were falling in dangerous proximity to the party from an "Archie" or anti-aircraft gun that was vigorously shelling a German raider. There was plenty of fresh fruit in the mess where the young men could have sat in the cool of the shelter and eaten their fill, but they preferred to stand in the hot afternoon sun and munch unripe currants at imminent risk of their necks. Truly youth is a wonderful thing!

Another day a band of them strolled out over the fields to a certain billet, where previously the battalion and other Guards' battalions had been quartered for some time. There they visited the pretty garden which the Guards had laid out with wonderful centre-pieces, representing the different regimental crests of the Guards in coloured stones. But, while the Guards had been away, the heathen had raged. There were shell-holes in the garden, and the rains had begun to gnaw at the centre-pieces. . . . In the Salient everything, living and dead, seems vowed to destruction.

The night fatigues were dull, dangerous, and depressing. Night after night parties sallied forth with pick and spade, often in gum-boots, if there was work to be done on a wet trench, and plodded through the darkness to a more or less apocryphal rendezvous.

All the open ground close up to the Front in the Salient is sprayed by machine-gun fire

at night, and a brisk burst of shell fire in addition was no uncommon experience for the nightly fatigue parties. Sometimes the sapper folk would be late at the trysting-place, and the men would stand huddled up together like a flock of sheep on a moor, while the officers would fret and fume and mutter dire menaces about "reporting the fellow to the Brigade." Then the sapper would arrive, and the officer, about to deliver himself of a few weighty and well-considered remarks on punctuality, which is the politeness of soldiers as well as of kings, would find himself confronted by an obsequious R.E. corporal protesting that the "officer" was "jest over there."

Translated into the plain language of fact, this indication might mean anything from 300 yards to a mile; but at length the sapper officer would appear, silencing with honeyed words and profuse apology the torrent of reproach bubbling at the Guardsman's lips. After that the sapper officer would take charge, and the Guards' officer would find his rôle restricted to walking up and down for anything up to three or four hours, bored to tears, unable even to smoke, because smoking on these night fatigues is forbidden to the men. He had not even the mental occupation of keeping the men to their task. They knew that they could not go home to bed until the job was finished, whatever it was, and therefore every man worked

with a will, jackets discarded, sleeves rolled up.

Everybody who has been up in the Salient knows what the "trenches" there are like. The Hun holds the high ground everywhere: he has the dry soil, the observation. In the British lines the ground is so wet that a foot below the surface you strike water . . . and probably a dead man as well, so thick do they lie in this blood-drenched region. Therefore the parapets are for the most part built up, and indeed the whole defences—parapet, traverses, and parados—have to be built up with sandbags, which, under the influence of shell fire and the weather, have to be continually renewed and repaired.

A parapet that will shelter a platoon of the line will not do for a platoon of Guardsmen. It is a question of inches. When the Gurkhas relieved the Guards in the trenches in the Béthune region early in the war, the Guards had to put a double tier of sandbags along the fire-step so that the little hillmen could look over the top of the parapet. Therefore, in the Salient, it often happened that the Guards found themselves sheltering in the open behind a thin parapet in bad repair, behind which they had to kneel in order to protect themselves against the enemy snipers.

Work, with a capital "W," loomed large in the orders of every company commander of the Guards in the Salient. In truth, there was much to be

done. In places, the trench lines were not connected, parapets were low and by no means bullet-proof, parados were distinguished mainly by their absence. Thus, when one battalion of Guards relieved another in the Salient, it took over not only the trench but a vast programme of "improvements," as the house-builders say.

The first night our Ensign went up to the front line with the company, the Guards' battalion which they were relieving had a big scheme of work to hand over. As junior officer, our Ensign was given charge of the men in the front line, for the first half of their turn "in," whilst The Beak and Peter remained, according to usage, in the company headquarters in the support line. For the second half, Peter was to relieve our Ensign.

While the relief was being effected, an ensign of the outgoing company took our young man round the trench, and, with the air of a Commissioner of the Office of Works, showed the new-comer the work which had been begun, which the incoming company was to finish. The barbed wire was probably defective and would have to be inspected and possibly repaired; here they had put in three new traverses; here they had repaired the parapet that had been blown in by an enemy trench mortar; there they had started to build a parados; this part of the parapet was not bullet-proof . . . they had had a man wounded passing there the

previous day; and so on, and so forth. The officer explained everything with admirable lucidity, and then, his men having all filed out, trotted away, leaving our Ensign, rather bewildered, standing on a precarious trench-board, half immersed in yellow water, with an overpowering odour of death in his nostrils.

Both The Beak and Peter presently came up to help him over his difficulties at his first taste of trench warfare, and together they mapped out a scheme to spread the work remaining to be done over the time they were to spend in the front line. The platoon sergeants were called into consultation: they had already got the sentries posted in the fire-bays, and the rest of the men they set at the task of filling sandbags. It was agreed that our Ensign should go out and have a look at the wire, and also the outside of the parapet, to see how it could best be made bullet-proof.

A little later the officer, in company with his orderly, his rifle slung at his back, a handsome and self-possessed young man, who was introduced as the wiring corporal, and a rugged Irish sergeant called Kinole, slung his leg over the parapet and dropped out into the open on the other side.

It was a dark windy night. In front of them the German star-shells were soaring aloft, and the night was alive with noises reverberating in the darkness. Machine-guns on

both sides coughed their harsh "tack - tack . . . tack - tack-tack." Rifle shots rang out here and there; and every now and then, with a bang and a whizz, a Verey light whirled up into the dark sky from the trenches behind the little party. Somewhere on the right a mighty British *strafe* was in progress: our Ensign could hear the steady racket of the shells and see their orange flicker in the sky as they burst against the surrounding blackness.

The chinking of tools resounded very faintly out of the dark in front of them.

"'Tis Fritz out workin'," muttered Sergeant Kinole hoarsely. "Iv'ry night 'tis the same, sir. . . . He works like anny ould mole."

The party crossed a very wet ditch and came to the wire. Here the wiring corporal took the lead and they all crawled along behind him, bending their heads low, as he did, to examine the strands of wire against the sky. In places the wire was broken and would have to be replaced.

Then our Ensign took a look at the parapet from the outside. There was no room to strengthen it from within, and outside the trench the ground sloped away into a morass. The only thing would be to lay an earth foundation and build it up on that. The sergeant hopped back into the trench, and presently returned with a horde of bulky figures with pick and shovel who scrambled over the parapet, and, dropping

on the other side, started shovelling dry earth on to the wet ground at the foot of the parapet.

All night they worked and shovelled and built, inside and outside the trench, while the star-shells spouted and the machine-guns rapped loudly. With the first flicker of dawn they trooped in, and then, while the dawn was breaking sullenly, the men stood to on the fire-step all along the trench, while our Ensign, empty and cold and dreadfully sleepy, wondered why the trench smells were so overpoweringly accentuated in the early morning.

With the coming of dawn the men stood down, our Ensign inspected rifles, the Commanding Officer, on his daily round of the trenches, appeared and asked him a question or two, and after that, amid a general sizzling of bacon all along the trench, the officer made for the earthen cave which had been pointed out to him as his quarters. There was the faithful Johnson with a mug of hot cocoa; there was our Ensign's blanket and his air-pillow arranged on a carpet of clean sandbags.

Our young man slept until ten o'clock, and then rose to find his washing things spread out in the sunshine, Johnson close by boiling his shaving water in a mess tin. He made a leisurely toilet, then sauntered down the communication trench to the company headquarters, where he breakfasted jocosely with The Beak and Peter off eggs and bacon

and tea and bread-and-butter and strawberry jam. Of course the double-company mess was broken up when the battalion was in the line, so, by mutual arrangement, No. 1 Company took the mess cook, and No. 2 the mess waiter. It was the latter, rather more dishevelled than his wont, who served the three officers at breakfast in a tiny dug-out four feet square.

One turn in the trenches is very much like another. Sometimes they got shelled, and on the first occasion, our Ensign, emerging rather hastily from his cubby-hole to find out what the noise was about, was shamed into complete nonchalance by the unshakable phlegm of the men. He soon learned to adopt the prescribed air of indifference to such attentions from the enemy, but, like most people, he never got used to shelling. Once or twice he went out patrolling with his orderly, a completely fearless, wholly unsqueamish, and eminently practical young man. It was a messy business, crawling through the wet grass in the dark, and rather trying to the nerves. But, as a sage friend of our Ensign's used to say, "If you can't see the Hun, he can't see you," and our young man more than once drew comfort from this practical maxim as he and MacFinnigan crawled through No Man's Land with eyes and ears strained for sight or sound of the enemy.

Letters and newspapers ar-

rived with unfailing regularity in the front line every afternoon at teatime. So they knew all about the great events that were happening on the Somme, especially as the latest bulletins came up daily from the army headquarters, and were stuck up (by means of a cartridge driven into the sandbag walls) outside the company headquarters. Everybody speculated endlessly as to the moment when the Guards would be hurled into that boiling cauldron in the south. Rumours of all kinds were rife: everybody had his own theories and "inferma-

tion," especially the men. Our Ensign used to hear them gossiping round their breakfast fires in the trenches, where every cookhouse rumour was thoroughly examined.

At last one day, when the Battalion was expecting to go out of the trenches altogether for several weeks' rest, it was reported that the Somme was its next destination. This time rumour spoke true. About one o'clock A.M., on a mellow summer night, the Battalion marched quietly by companies across the market-place of an old Belgian town, where it would in a day or two entrain for the Unknown.

(To be continued.)

GREY WOLF.

I.

FATE having directed my wanderings to North China, it happened that one morning I found myself in the main— I might almost say only— street of Liu-shou-ying. On either hand it was more congested than usual, and there was an air of suppressed excitement about the crowd, who, for a wonder, were leaving a narrow but clear pathway down the centre of the road. As I rode up this on my way to the yamen where I had business, I saw at the farther end a force of policemen approaching, evidently escorting a somewhat unpopular personage, if one might judge from the hoots and demeanour of the crowd. The many-headed were not confining themselves merely to words, but were showering stones and all manner of filth on the objects of their dislike. As the procession drew near I saw that in the centre of the police was a band of twenty-five or thirty criminals chained together, on their way, as I learned later, to execution.

It was not a pleasant sight, for the poor wretches were

streaming with blood and dirt, and could only with difficulty stagger along. Indeed it seemed almost doubtful if they would reach the execution ground outside the city alive. I had to wait in a side lane till the procession had passed, and then went on to the yamen, where, after transacting my business, I asked one of the officials who the men were. He told me they were Pai Lang (Grey Wolf) and the remnants of his gang, who had been captured after a sharp fight in a gorge high up in the mountains. They had a long list of crimes, mostly robbery with murder, to their credit, the last having taken place at Liu-shou-ying only a short time previously. On my pressing him further he recounted the details of the crime, and introduced me to Hsun Cha Kuan (Inspector of Police) Mang I, who had followed up and captured the robbers. From him I learned the story of the chase and of Grey Wolf's last stand, which I have set forth in the following pages.

II.

The sun was setting over the low hills, which encircle the little settlement of Chin-chao, in a blaze of crimson

and gold, turning the fleckless blue sea, which murmured sleepily over the sands of the foreshore, into a lake of fire.

The tide was at its full, and the beach presented an animated appearance, as two gangs of sturdy Chinese coolies, some thirty or forty strong, were busily engaged in hauling in the last stretches of the big seine net, which earlier in the afternoon had been dropped in a semicircle far out at sea. Curiously enough the men did not handle the main rope itself. Instead each man was armed with a thin line to which was attached a big iron hook. This he slipped into a loop prepared on the main rope, so that the subsidiary lines looked like the lateral spines of a sole, radiating from the fish's backbone. The two gangs walked back with the net bodily, inclining slightly inwards, each man as he reached a spot marked by a small ridge detaching his hook and taking his place at the front again.

The chord of the semicircle, originally nearly a mile in length, had been reduced to a few yards only. All along the arc naked figures, which looked as if they had been moulded in bronze, were standing in the water treading down the lower edge of the net, whilst on shore the remainder were making steady progress to a chant of "Hey-aa—Ha-saa," which sounded not unmusically in the still evening air.

Peaceful though the scene was, yet to an Englishman, had one been by, the rolling notes would have brought to mind a [similar tuneful chant which centuries ago was the terror

of the coasts of East Anglia. Then it was the signal for men to arm themselves, whilst women and children hurriedly drove cattle and flocks to inland fastnesses. Denoting as it did the approach of Scandinavian raiders, it was last heard in England during the latter half of the eleventh century, rising in a thunderous volume of sound from the throats of the Vikings under King Sweyn of Denmark, as, led by Hereward the Wake, they tugged at their oars on their way, through winding mere and fen, to the sack of Goldenboro'. Pirates they were, these seafaring forefathers of ours — prototypes of many a sea-robber who still flourishes in the creeks and along the coasts of China. Perhaps it would not be going too far to say that more than one amongst the busy throng, lustily hauling on the cords of the net, were not averse to turning an honest penny by methods which differed little from those of our ancestors. In the meantime the net was closing in an ever-narrowing arc, in the midst of which fish were leaping wildly in a vain endeavour to escape the toils of those steadily on-coming meshes. At length it was drawn ashore, amidst an indescribable turmoil of shouting fishermen and flapping fish.

In the offing a big two-masted junk had just lowered her patched sails and dropped anchor in some six feet of water. With a big painted eye (No have eye, no can see. No

can see, no can go) on either side of her bows, and a weird contraption, looking like a cross between a corkscrew and a bottle-brush, at the top of each mast to keep devils from alighting there, she would have been a strange sight in English waters, but was a picturesque adjunct to her present surroundings. Half a dozen of her crew lolled over her bulwarks, appearing to take a perfunctory interest in the results of the catch, which was being divided up according to species. The bigger fish were weighed on an ingenious balance, consisting of a long steel rod with a sliding weight, the whole suspended on a bit of string held aloft by the weighman. Under the superintendence of a venerable old white-bearded Chinaman, and amidst much noisy chaffering, soles, pomfret, eels, and various other fish were rapidly disposed of to local traders, who removed their purchases in panniers slung from donkeys, or in baskets swinging at either end of a bamboo pole and carried over one shoulder. Shortly the noisy babel subsided, and silence reigned over the shore, broken only by a subdued murmur from the fishing village, or rather camp, half a mile away, and an occasional voice from the junk.

An hour or two after the turn of the tide, as the night drew on, and the earlier crimson glory of the sunset gave way to the milder radiance of a silver moon, men came ashore from the junk in parties of three or four, and made their way to the

village of Liu-shou-ying, which lay a mile or two inland in a fold of the hills on the banks of a fair-sized stream.

Liu-shou-ying is a big village, or rather a small town; a prosperous place, carrying on a fairly extensive trade in silks and Chinese cloth, more especially with the big Manchu mandarins of the north. Its main street was lined with shops displaying a most heterogeneous collection of merchandise. Here an odour of putrefaction warned the passer-by that he was approaching a fishmonger, whose wares had been ruthlessly torn from their native element days and even weeks before. Near him would be a barber's shop, cheek-by-jowl with a butcher, where sundry gruesome-looking objects enabled one to form an accurate idea of the interior economy of the animal world. Then perhaps would come a linen-drapery, who displayed shoddy calicoes and soft goods "made in Germany," contrasting much to their disadvantage with rich brocaded silks and satins of Chinese manufacture. Adjoining was a ship's compro-dore, a sort of local Whiteley's, who was prepared to sell you anything in the way of tinned food, provided that you on your part were willing to face the dangers of ptomaine poisoning, and who could produce all sorts of liquor, though their brand was doubtful. Followed a greengrocer, or a dealer in indifferent cutlery and dangerous kerosene lamps, or china that set one's teeth on edge. Coffin-makers might be seen in

closest proximity to chop-houses—perhaps a convenient arrangement; whilst in one glorious medley were photographers, money-changers, cheap jewelers or watchmakers, who frequently combined their trade with the profession of dentist, notified by a huge gilded tooth or an enormous pair of forceps, and a host of other tradesmen. The long cabalistic signs hanging beside the doorways, gay with gilding and red paint, often quaintly carved in bold relief; the picturesque paper lanterns of all sizes, from monsters equalling a fifty-gallon cask down to a thing not much bigger than a small-sized football; the beautiful pot-plants in flower, more often small flowering shrubs than the plants that in Europe are grown in this manner; the sea-green tiled roof of a temple surmounted with dragons and weird nameless animals,—all drew one's attention from the tawdriness of the majority of the articles displayed, and almost made one forget the pervading smells and the filth beneath one's feet. The roadway, never very wide, was further encroached upon by the small open booths set up at the sweet will of their owners, and was crowded with chattering mobs of blue-clad coolies of both sexes, and sprawling with semi-naked babies and dogs.

Through this entangled maze the junk's crew shouldered their way to make selection amongst the delicacies (!) displayed in the various chop-houses, and were soon seated

appeasing the pangs of hunger. They were not a prepossessing-looking lot to the European eye, but they seemed inoffensive enough. Their leader was a heavily-built, broad-shouldered man of thirty-five or forty, who, like his crew, was still wearing the Manchu pigtail. Across his right cheek, extending from the corner of the eye to the lobe of the ear, was the scar of what must have been a deep wound. It gave him a peculiar and somewhat sinister appearance. The injury had evidently weakened the muscles of the eyelid, so that the right eye was always half closed, whilst the socket was merged in the wound, and appeared to extend in a slanting direction as far as the ear. When roused by any emotion the scar stood out, a livid streak of white, seeming to cut the face into two halves.

Taking one man with him, he sought the house of Ho Kee, one of the leading merchants in the place, and introduced himself as Li Chang, the agent of Sun-yat-sen, a rich mandarin well known to Ho Kee, and explained that he had been sent to receive a large consignment of silk. At the same time he produced a letter from Sun-yat-sen saying that, owing to illness, he was unable to come to Liu-shou-ying, but was sending in his stead Li Chang, a confidential servant, who had authority to take over and settle for the silk. After a conversation which took place over innumerable cups of tea, Ho Kee suggested to Li Chang that he should

join him at supper, and put up at his house for the night, so that they could discuss their business at their ease. Li Chang made some little demur before accepting the invitation, but eventually agreed, sending his servant back to the junk after a short conversation aside.

He explained to his host that he had been giving some instructions about the safety of his boat, as he had heard talk of pirates having lately been active in the big bay, which stretches from Chin-chao northward to beyond the Great Wall, fifteen or sixteen miles away. In especial "Pai Lang," or Grey Wolf, a piratical star of some magnitude, whose baleful glow had for some months been shed over the seas that lave the northern shores of China, was reported to be operating in the vicinity. He added that the pirate was considered to resemble him very closely, and had a scar on his cheek almost exactly similar, and that he had had some trouble with the police on that account. Ho Kee remarked that it was well to be cautious, but that he did not consider there was any real danger, as a small Chinese gunboat had for weeks been patrolling the bay, and was at present lying in the harbour at Kai-ping, a small port situated at the foot of a low bluff about six miles from Chin-chao. Ho Kee added that the gunboat had orders to remain with steam up, and ready to sail at an hour's notice, and that, since her arrival on the station, nothing further had been heard

of the pirates, who were believed to have moved south along the coast, and to be sheltering in one of the numerous bays or creeks that open on the sea. Grey Wolf, too, had recently had a reverse, it was said, and his band was much reduced in numbers in consequence. In fact he had heard that the pirate had not more than ten men with him, and was in hiding, but the police were hard on his tracks.

So saying, he led his guest into the courtyard behind his shop, and into his private apartments. These might also be described as a small village, as they consisted of some half a dozen or more separate houses built along the sides of a quadrilateral, and opening into the courtyard or yards, for it was divided into two by a line of buildings. The various buildings presented merely a blank wall to the outside world, to which there were only two outlets, one through the shop and the other in rear, opening on to a so-called road scored with deep ruts, which led through some fields in the direction of the sea. This rear door was made of stout planking, and was large enough to allow the passage of laden carts. Like many Chinamen, Ho Kee had a taste for the beautiful, and a prominent object in the front courtyard was a big earthenware "kong" or vase, some three feet high and about eighteen inches in diameter, richly glazed and ornamented. It stood on a carved pedestal, and was half hidden by the leaves and flowers of

a big pink lotus, which was growing in it. On either side a fine oleander, one mass of pink blossoms, stood in a green tub, the three forming a bank of flowers, which served a double purpose, as they gratified Ho Kee's artistic sense, and at the same time ensured privacy, as they were practically an impenetrable screen against curious glances. One of the above-mentioned houses was occupied solely by tutelary gods. These were enshrined above a big joss-table or altar, on which stood various pewter and bronze vessels, such as candlesticks, primitive oil-lamps, vases containing long sticks of incense, and curiously-shaped bowls in which the burning incense sticks were placed before the joss. The remaining houses were fully occupied by Ho Kee and his relations unto the third and fourth generation, for Ho Kee, his mother, his sons, and their families all found accommodation within the hospitable walls of the enclosure.

Ho Kee led his guest into a room at the side of the inner courtyard, and they were soon seated before steaming bowls of rice and fish, which rapidly disappeared before the dexterous manipulation of their chopsticks. After the meal Ho Kee, strictly in the interests of business, primed Li Chang with a generous draught of fiery shamshu, and with some circumlocution the pair commenced the usual bargaining over the price of the silk, each taking a keen intellectual delight in his efforts to over-

reach his friend. At length a price was agreed upon, and the goods and the money changed hands. The silk was carried out of the shop into Li Chang's room, and Ho Kee at the same time carefully placed away the money in a capacious safe, which he equally carefully double-locked, afterwards secreting the keys about his person. After a little more conversation the pair went to bed, and soon the silence of night was brooding over the sleeping village.

It must have been about an hour later that Li Chang crept softly out of the guest-chamber, and made his way with infinite caution to the big wooden door in rear of the block of buildings. It was fastened by a broad iron bar working on a pivot in the centre, and fixing into a slot at either end. It was further secured by heavy bolts at top and bottom, but had no lock, as it could only be opened from the inside. As noiselessly as possible Li Chang withdrew the bolts, stopping work at the slightest creak and listening intently. Satisfying himself that all was silent in the house, he continued, and slowly opened the door to admit the passage of three men armed with both rusty-looking but still serviceable rifles and long murderous knives. Stealthily they placed themselves, two commanding the outer courtyard and all the doors opening into it, whilst Li Chang himself with the other man flung open the door of Ho Kee's sleeping apartment, and before the un-

fortunate merchant had opened his eyes, his hands and feet had been tied together and his head muffled in a sort of shawl. His wife was treated similarly, and the wretched shopkeeper's keys having been secured, the two ruffians proceeded to rifle the room of anything that was both portable and valuable. They then went into the shop and looted the safe, also taking possession of several bales of valuable silk. Placing one man on guard, the remaining three left the house, and, joined by other members of the band who were lurking close by, they went off to the local yamen, which was guarded by an armed sentry. He was summarily shot, and the band rushed into the yamen, easily overpowering the sleeping guard of policemen.

Free now from all fear of interference, for in the East it is seldom that the inhabitants of a town or village attacked by armed thieves will do aught but cower inside their houses, hoping to escape attention, the quiet and caution that had hitherto characterised the actions of the band fell from them. With rough jokes and sinister laughter they visited the house of Yin Hsing, another rich merchant. Hammering on the doors they demanded admittance, and on its being refused they broke their way in, after first taking the precaution to send a party to the rear of the house, lest the inmates should attempt to escape by that road. Yin Hsing was seized and his shop and house gutted, whilst both

he and his family came in for many blows and much rough usage to mark the displeasure of the bandits at the delay caused them. The booty secured was large both in bulk and value, so the thieves rapidly harnessed a couple of mules apiece to two carts, on to which they piled their prize. Taking Yin Hsing with them, they returned to Ho Kee's house, and, after adding the pick of his property to the contents of the carts, left the village. As both Ho Kee and Yin Hsing evinced decided disinclination to accompany the band, their bonds were tightened, and they were unceremoniously dumped down on top of the loads. The mules were urged to a quick pace, and the party swiftly made their way to the shore. Here transferring everything, including their prisoners, to the junk, the pirates hoisted their sails and stood out to sea under the influence of a strong steady breeze.

As the junk heeled over to the wind, heading north-east, she was brilliantly lit up by the silver rays of the setting moon, which had, earlier in the evening, materially assisted the robbers in their work in the looted village. Now by veiling her light under the waves of the western horizon, at the psychological moment, she would further assist them by enabling them to sail close past the port of Kaiping secure from prying eyes on the gunboat, should it chance that a watch was being kept aboard her. Soon the lighthouse on

Kaiping bluff was passed on their port beam, and Li Chang set their course for Tang-kang-tzu, a small village a mile or two north of the Great Wall. A little beyond this a tiny creek empties its waters into the sea, and here just about dawn the junk dropped her anchor close by three or four other junks, almost exact replicas of herself. A messenger was despatched to a grove of trees a little distance away, and shortly returned piloting a gang of coolies with wheelbarrows, and ten or a dozen mules and donkeys. The junk was meanwhile rapidly unloaded, and Ho Kee and Yin Hsing, who now displayed a fatalistic resignation, were made to mount a couple of sorry-looking steeds. Four or five of the gang surrounded them to prevent any attempt at escape, though the futility of such was apparent, and the party headed towards the range of hills that lies some eight miles from the shore. Avoiding even the poor Chinese roads, they threaded their way along narrow paths, walled in by towering kow-liang, giving a wide berth to any villages, and especially to the big walled one of Kaiyuang which lay directly between them and the hills, where there was a big police and octroi post. It is no libel on the Chinese police to say that they fully appreciate the value of the principle of "squeeze," and octroi rules offer unlimited opportunities for its application. Even a party of genuine merchants would have been

stopped till they had paid duty and also satisfied the avarice of the "Hsun Cha Kuan" (Inspector of Police), whilst in this instance Li Chang and his gang, encumbered by their prisoners, would certainly have been arrested, as this would have paid the police better than even the most liberal "squeeze." Not that this would have materially benefited Ho Kee and his fellow-captive, at least pecuniarily, as the sum the Hsun Cha Kuan would have demanded for his assistance would have probably equalled any ransom that Li Chang intended to extort. Still they would have obtained their freedom earlier, and have escaped much rough travelling and possible ill-usage. By a long detour the gang passed Kaiyuang without attracting attention, and an hour or so later entered a gloomy defile which pierced the range of hills.

It was about seven o'clock on the morning after the robbery that news of the occurrence reached Kaiping, and Captain Tso Tsung Tang, who commanded the gunboat lying there, immediately put out to sea on the chance of picking up news of the pirates somewhere along the coast. Steaming first to the spot where the junk had anchored on the previous evening, he learned from a fishing boat that she had been seen by a fisherman sailing north-east. The man occupied an outlying hut in the fishing encampment, and had been awakened by the baying of a dog. Going outside to

quiet the brute, he had seen the junk sails going up in the distance, and rather wondering at her midnight start, had idly watched her push off. He also gave a clue, which later turned out to be valuable, by informing Captain Tso that she had a conspicuous triangular white patch in her fore mainsail, and that whilst she had lain at anchor some of her crew had been engaged in mending her side, replacing an old plank on her port bow by a fresh one. The wood of this plank being new, was of a different colour to her weather-beaten sides, and should be visible from some distance. A question or two elicited the information that he thought the plank had been let in about two hand's-breadths above the water-line, and that it extended from the prow of the junk for about six feet along the side. It was not a great deal in the way of clues, but there was nothing more to be discovered at Chin-chao.

At Liu-shou-ying Tso obtained a vague description of Li Chang and one or two of his gang, and took on with him Ho Kee's youngest son, Yu Kee, a boy of about nineteen, who said he would be able to identify three or four of the robbers. He was an intelligent lad, and the only one who thought of mentioning the conspicuous scar, which betrayed the identity of the quarry to the Captain, and thus enabled him to recognise in the person of Li Chang the notorious "Grey Wolf." It was about midday when he

was aboard the gunboat again, and steaming across the bay to search the north-eastern shores, realising that he had no ordinary thief to deal with.

A small fleet of junks was lying off the bar that closes the mouth of a stream half a mile south of the Great Wall, which wound like a serpent across the plain and up and over the hills; but a rapid search revealed nothing incriminating, and the boat steamed slowly along the coast, a sharp look-out being kept. Off Tang-kang-tzu she overhauled three or four junks peacefully engaged in fishing, but gleaned no information, with the exception of the fact that on the previous night they had been anchored off the mouth of the creek some three li north of Tang-kang-tzu, and that some time during the hours of darkness a strange junk had come in and anchored near by. They could not say at what hour she had arrived, as it was whilst they were asleep, and they saw her for the first time in the morning, but they pointed her out where she lay as they spoke. They added that she had disembarked a lot of cargo, and that as they were putting out to sea for the morning fishing, a long pack-train had left her, and started in the direction of Kaiyuang. Hopes rose high that the pirate was found, but in spite of a careful examination with powerful glasses as he steamed towards her, Tso could see no trace of the new plank which was one of his slender clues, though she was

lying, her sails lowered, and her port side towards him, gently rising and falling to the heave of the tide. The Captain drew up alongside, and went on board to examine her more closely. He found three of her crew in the stuffy cabin, who told him they had left Chefoo a couple of days before with a cargo of silks. These, they believed, were consigned to some place inland, as the captain, a man called Fan Ch'ih, with the remainder of the crew, had left a few hours previously, taking with them the cargo loaded on pack ponies. They said they did not know the name of the place for which their comrades were bound, but did not expect their return for three or four days at the earliest.

The story was plausible, but the Captain, knowing his countrymen, was suspicious, and insisted on searching the junk, also ordering the sails to be hoisted. Nothing, however, was found in the boat, and the sails had no such patch as had been described. He noticed that a big square piece of canvas had, obviously lately, been let into the fore mainsail. This was explained by the statement that it had been badly torn in a storm when they were running up to Chefoo, and repaired as they lay at that port. The demeanour of the men was innocent and bland to a degree, and everything appeared satisfactory, yet none the less, somehow, Tso doubted. Yu Kee had been present during the examination, but was

unable to identify any of the three as having been concerned in the robbery. Accordingly Tso left the junk and steamed away, though suspicion was still rampant in his mind. Despite their innocent blandness and fluent explanations, he felt that his visit had been expected and prepared for. He determined to put back to Tang-kang-tzu, and after anchoring under shelter of the headland, to communicate with the Tao-tai of the district at Haicheng. In the meantime he proposed to make another, but surprise, search of the suspected craft later in the afternoon, in the hope of catching the men off their guard.

He put off about four o'clock in a small boat, commandeered for the purpose, with half a dozen of his crew dressed as ordinary Chinese fishermen. As it happened he found the junk deserted, and after a minute inspection of the port side discovered that without doubt the ship had been lately repaired just where the fisherman had told him. A closer examination of the place showed that a thin plank of old wood, the exact colour of the hull, so thin one might almost call it a shaving, had been carefully fastened over the top of the new plank, completely hiding it. Encouraged by the discovery, he again boarded the junk, and, accident aiding him, he found—thanks to the instinct which prevents a Chinaman from ever wasting anything—in a hollow behind a loose plank a piece of canvas with a big triangular white

patch in the centre of it. Comparing it with the mainsail, he saw it corresponded exactly in size and shape with the square that, according to the tale, had been sewn on to replace the damage done in the gale off Chefoo. Had he had any doubt remaining as to the identity of the boat, it would have been entirely dispelled by the discovery of a carved agate snuff-bottle, hidden away in a sort of locker, which Yu Kee recognised as his father's property.

Tso determined to remain in ambush with three of his men, in the hope of capturing the three members of the gang on their return. He ordered his own boat to cruise at some little distance in the offing, as though engaged in fishing, but near enough to be handy in case of necessity. Fortune favoured him, as she was able to push off from the pirate unobserved. Tso was most anxious about this, as he was eager to secure the men he had interviewed earlier, both as members of the gang, and because he believed that by certain persuasive measures he would be able to loosen their tongues, and obtain information as to the whereabouts of the rest of the band. Perhaps there was also some slight natural resentment influencing him at their attempt to hoodwink him, and a desire to teach them a lesson. However that may be, all the time he had been searching the ship he had been on tenter-hooks lest they should return, and, seeing the boat alongside, take warning and make themselves scarce. On the other

hand, they might have been joined by some of their companions, and Tso, knowing how thoroughly Grey Wolf had trained his band in the "dead men tell no tales" principle, feared being surprised with insufficient force at his back. However, nothing so untoward occurred, and an hour later, just as it was getting dusk, his patience was rewarded by the bow of a sampan striking the side of the junk, and two men clambered on board. Tso still lay low, but directly the painter of the sampan had been made fast astern, he gave a low whistle and the two were promptly seized, their hands being made fast behind their backs. The first information demanded of them was the whereabouts of their confederate. The reply came promptly that he was lying drunk in a village three miles away, and had been left there as there was no means of moving him. Tso nodded his head, and the speaker was thrown on his face, and several blows were lustily applied with a stout bamboo in the place where they would do most good. The victim was then unceremoniously pitched to one side in the scuppers, and his companion, who had been stolidly regarding the scene, interrogated. He began the same story, but was interrupted by a similar punishment before he got half-way through. Tso then addressed the two men, and explained that he intended to have the truth, and that he proposed, in order to assist their memories, to fasten a

tackle to the rope that bound their wrists behind their backs, and by means of it to raise them clear of the deck, and, since it was a cold night, a brazier full of charcoal would be kept glowing some four inches from the soles of their bare feet. When they had told him the exact truth as to their companion's whereabouts, and the destination of the remainder of the gang, they would be lowered to the deck again.

He gave a sign, and they were hoisted up, one on either side of the ship. Impassively smoking cigarette after cigarette, Tso sat between them watching for any indication of weakening. At the end of half an hour he significantly remarked that their memories required a lot of assistance, and that he would have to resort to further aide-memoires, at the same time giving orders for their preparation. I can only add that the Inquisitors of Spain were children in the art of torture beside the Chinese. The preparations were sufficient. One of the two men broke down completely, and shouted out that the gang were making their way to a hidden gorge thirty miles or more distant, and that their companion had gone to report to their leader, whom he admitted was Grey Wolf, the visit of the gunboat, and how they had succeeded in hoodwinking her commander. Tso asked the other victim if this was correct, and on the news being confirmed, the poor wretches were cast loose from the tackle, and still shackled conveyed to

the gunboat for the night. A messenger was sent to Haicheng with a report of the information extracted, so that the Tao-tai could take any measures he considered necessary.

The authorities in China being staunch upholders of the "Festina lente" principle, the Tao-tai would not receive the messenger that night, but during the next day an escort of armed police arrived to take over the two prisoners and lodge them in the yamen at Haicheng. Ho Kee's son, Yu Kee, was also to come into the city to give evidence about the robbery, and because he might be useful for purposes of identification in the event of its being possible to follow up the band. Captain Tso at the same time received orders to return to Kaiping, taking with him the junk.

Handcuffed and with leg-irons attached to their ankles, the pirates arrived at the yamen after a toilsome march of fifteen miles, during which, on any signs of flagging, their energies had been revived by a prod from a bayonet, or the lash of a whip curling about their shoulders. Without further ceremony they were at once sentenced to the "cangue," or the wearing of a heavy board round the neck which prevents a prisoner's hands from reaching his face. By way of refinement the two were fastened into one board, and thus they were left for the night, after having been supplied with a modicum of the coarsest food that would keep their souls and bodies together.

Next morning they were brought before the Tao-tai, who asked if they were willing to act as guides to the pirates' lair, and promised them their lives if they agreed to do so. Realising that it would mean at least a respite from the cangue and their shackles, they consented, though knowing the ways of the Chinese magistrate, they had little expectation of a prolonged existence. Still there was a hundred to one chance that something might turn up in their favour, and at the worst they would probably get off with being shot or beheaded; whereas they knew that, if they refused, death by the "Ling Ch'ih" or "One Thousand Cuts" would be their portion, or quite possibly the sentence would run "Death—but condemned are not to die within seventy-two hours of commencement of execution."

On their acceptance of the Tao-tai's terms, though these could scarcely be called liberal, the two men were released from the cangue and given a plentiful meal, but were kept under lock and key till the police were ready to start, which was not for another couple of hours. The force consisted of a hundred men under the command of Hsun Cha Kuan Mang I, a boy of about twenty, nephew of the Tao-tai, who owed his position more to his family than to any proved ability or energy. As a matter of fact he had plenty of brains and common-sense, but he had no wish to remain in the police, and was merely neglecting the

job, until something better came into his uncle's hands.

The police left their barracks at about two o'clock in the afternoon, with scarcely a pretence at formation, Mang I being somewhere about the middle of the mob in a two-wheeled springless cart drawn by a big black mule. The cart was covered by a bamboo framework over which was stretched a sort of oiled paper, while a canopy of dark-blue cloth projected as far as the mule's head, supported by a couple of poles. Most Europeans would have preferred a term of penal servitude to a prolonged ride in such a conveyance over a Chinese road, but the Asiatic seems built on a different plan. India, Burma, Ceylon, or China, he will sit, even sleep, contentedly, and seemingly quite at his ease, whilst his springless conveyance, one wheel in a nine-inch rut or surmounting an outcropping boulder, plays cup-and-ball with him. The road, in this instance, was at first a narrow city street, paved with long blocks of stone some ten inches wide, placed at uncertain intervals, the gaps being yawning chasms three-parts full of oily-looking black mud. Similar in most respects to the main street of Liu-shou-ying, it was perhaps a trifle more congested, Haicheng being a walled and more important city. The police forced their way through the mob by means of a liberal expenditure of blows and abuse, eventually arriving at a series of gateways in the city

walls ingeniously arranged. The walls themselves were about sixty feet high and fully twenty thick. As the traveller passed through the archway, over which was a loopholed guard tower, it was necessary to turn sharp at right angles, and proceed along a narrow *cul-de-sac* for about fifty yards, when the road turned again at right angles under a second archway. Both could be closed at will by massive wooden doors, five or six inches thick, and iron-studded, which were fastened with bolts nearly as thick as a man's wrist. Outside the gates the road lay through a suburb between blank walls pierced with doorways, across which were built parallel walls some nine feet long, thus preventing the entrance of demons or evil spirits, which, as all the world know, cannot find their way round a corner.

This suburb was again enclosed by a battlemented wall, hard by the gateway of which was a temple sacred to Kuan Ti—the god of War—who was thus made responsible for the safety of the city. As he reached the gateway of the temple, Mang I halted his police and went in to invoke the divine assistance, as the god was powerful, and likely to bring the enterprise to naught unless treated with due respect. Had he not personally thrashed a man who fell asleep in the temple with his back towards the shrine?

Once clear of the gateway

of the suburb, the force pushed along an unmetalled road, bordered on either hand by tall fields of kowliang and Indian corn, and reached a spot not far from the foot of the hills soon after dusk, where Mang I decided to bivouac for the night. He himself found shelter in the house of a well-to-do farmer in a walled village of venerable age, for its walls were said to date from 50 B.C. He left his men to shift for themselves as best they could, but it is scarcely necessary to add they were well qualified to do this; and though the villagers may have had a poor night, the police were quite comfortable. The morning broke fine and sunny, showing the village embowered in splendid walnut trees, and surrounded on all sides by a sea of crops. At a little distance on a small hill a group of wide-spreading firs, sombre but picturesque, were waving their arms, under the influence of a light breeze, above the tall cone-shaped mounds of the village graveyard. With a brilliant blue sky overhead, and a background of purple hills, it was a scene to delight the eye of an artist; and Mang I, who was no mean performer with his pencil, sighed regretfully as he gave orders for a start, at the thought that he must spend his time in the chase of a band of criminals, instead of gratifying his artistic tastes.

Soon the road passed out of the cultivated area, and began to wind up the steep and stony side of the "Chiao Shan" or

"Dragon's Horn" hill. At the foot of this Mang I had to abandon his conveyance, adopting as a substitute a sedan chair, the bearers of which were the unfortunate guides, a constable holding the pigtail of each. The track was rough and stony, and led almost straight up the hill, being stepped in places where the gradient began to verge on the perpendicular, and the party had climbed fully twelve hundred feet before they reached the crest of the spur. Here a temporary halt was called before pushing on up another five hundred feet to Chiao-Shan-Sze temple, really sacred to the goddess of Mercy, but where Kuan Ti had a set of apartments. The temple was with its surroundings a most exquisite gem. Nestling in a wooded hollow just below the summit of the hill, its courtyards shaded by dusky-foliaged cedars contrasting with the gilding and crimson lacquer of the various shrines, it looked on the one hand far across the country to the waters of the sea, and on the other down a grassy valley with somewhat precipitous sides, at the bottom of which flowed a deep silver stream. From a distance the picture was perfect. Unfortunately, just as in the streets of Liu-shou-ying or Haicheng, the most artistic Chinese fabrics would be seen jumbled together with the cheap and nasty from Germany or Manchester—so here, on a near approach, the walls were cracked and dirty, the finery of the gods tinselly and tawdry,

and the gods themselves obviously mud and in ill repair. However, since the weather was hot, Mang I thought it was not unlikely that Kuan Ti might have temporarily left Haicheng and be occupying his rooms in the temple. The War-god's rooms were redeemed by some beautifully-drawn frescoes in black and white. The walls were divided into panels about eighteen inches square, and each panel was filled in with a hunting scene or some exploit of the god. One wall was devoted to the tortures of the damned, and depicted unfortunate souls being soused in cauldrons of boiling oil; thrust into lakes of burning pitch by demons armed with pitchforks, each prong of which was fashioned of a living snake; or impaled on growing and flaming bamboos.

Having again implored Kuan Ti's mighty aid in the capture of the pirates, Mang I left a couple of sticks of incense burning before the image of the god, and after crossing an offshoot of the Great Wall began a descent which zigzagged down a thousand feet, only to commence rising again on the farther side of the valley. This switchback progression continued throughout a couple of days. On the first night some of the party were fortunate enough to obtain shelter in the tiny hill village of Mai-po, but on the following night they were thrown on their own resources, and had to bivouac in the open. At length, after a toilsome ascent of a couple of thousand feet, they arrived at

the crest of a razor-backed ridge, a little below the nearer end of which was a big stone pillar supported on the back of some mythical monster, which bore a very faint resemblance to a gigantic tortoise. At its base a perennial spring welled up in a natural rock basin, whence it overflowed and made its way into the valley below. The inscription on the pillar showed it had been erected in honour of the San Kuan Ta Ti (lit., The three Officials Great God) who superintend earth, sky, and water. Here his guides informed Mang I that the troop would have to abandon the poor pretence of a road which had served them hitherto, and make their way along the crest of the ridge to its junction with Mount Feng Huang, a conspicuous cone-shaped hill which towered up four or five miles distant.

The scene was one of wild desolation now. They had penetrated into the heart of the hills, and, since they had left Mai-po forty-eight hours previously, they had not even seen a house, much less a village. All around them stretched steep rocky spurs cleft by deep stony valleys, the nakedness of the hills being accentuated rather than hidden by long, rank, yellow grasses. Here and there patches of scrub clung to the hillsides, and very occasionally a stunted pine would be seen bravely battling out a precarious existence in some sheltered nook. Where such did exist, their bent and battered appearance spoke eloquently of the

fury of the winter gales which, through many months in the year, endeavoured to tear them from their insecure footing. The police stumbled painfully along the boulder-strewn ridge, which was seamed with gullies and holes, traps for the unwary, hidden as they were by the grass. Few of the party escaped bad falls, and Mang I was at length forced to abandon his chair, after having been thrown several yards down the side of the hill, owing to the sudden disappearance of one of his bearers into a cleft some four feet deep. His indignation, as he made his way up to the top of the ridge again, was extreme, and the obviousness of the accident did not save the unfortunate bearer from a severe thrashing. As the evening drew on they reached the slope of Feng Huang hill, and bivouacked under shelter of one of its spurs. Mang I, after a somewhat frugal meal, as provisions were running short, had his guides brought before him, and inquired how much farther they had to go. Learning that another three miles would take them to a spot whence they could overlook the valley which formed the pirate's refuge, he ordered the two men to be securely bound and carefully guarded, lest, being so close, they should make a dash for liberty during the night and convey warning to Grey Wolf.

As the sun crept over the shoulder of Feng Huang hill the police set off on the last stage of their outward journey. They now even adopted a

semblance of military formation, for Mang I despatched an advanced guard of a dozen men under the leadership of one of the guides, himself following in support. He put his subaltern, an old police officer of the name of Tao Kuang, in command of the detachment, after giving him orders to move about half a mile ahead, and to secure some post of vantage whence it would be possible to shoot down upon the pirates. After proceeding about a couple of miles, he received news that the advanced guard had reached the edge of a precipitous landslip, and that there was no possibility of getting farther. Mang I cursed his guides, and promised them a lingering death for their deception, but was at length persuaded, by the man he had retained with him, to go forward and inspect the place for himself. He found that a portion of the hill, about one hundred yards broad, was completely gone, and at first sight the obstacle appeared insuperable. His guide, however, pointed out to him small crevices cut in the face of the gulf, ingeniously hidden by small mat screens elaborately prepared to exactly resemble the face of the cliff, and assured him that, on rounding the shoulder which blocked their view, he would find a pathway, a foot to eighteen inches wide, cut along the slip which extended for nearly half a mile. Mang I, despite his faults, was not deficient in courage, so, after

fastening the man to himself by a rope passing round their waists to prevent his giving him the slip, he made him lead the way and started on the perilous passage. It was slow, but proved fairly easy, as the crevices were deep enough to ensure secure foothold, whilst cunning holdfasts had been carefully arranged for the hands. At the end of half an hour he stood, as the guide had told him, on a practicable pathway in comparative security. He had now to lead the way, as the path was too narrow to admit of any one passing him, but after successfully traversing the chasm, and collecting his men at the farther side, he moved on in the same formation as before.

Fortune favoured his plans, and early in the afternoon he was looking down into a deep valley, or rather basin, scarcely a quarter of a mile broad, with steep sides, and a winding exit down which flowed a fair-sized stream, whilst the coign of vantage, secured by his subordinate, commanded a steep footpath leading up the slopes of Feng Huang. He found to his satisfaction that no watch was kept by Grey Wolf at the top end of the valley, that robber chief evidently considering the impracticability of the path an absolutely efficient safeguard. The lust of the chase had now entered into the policeman's heart, and after a rapid survey of the valley he saw that if he could manage to block the lower exit, his quarry would be in

the toils. It was also obvious to him that he must by no means show himself until this lower exit was secured, as, if the band once scattered over the countryside, it would be almost impossible to round them up, so that all his toil and discomfort would go for nothing.

Making his men keep well down under cover, he selected thirty to remain and guard the upper pathway, leaving Tao Kuang in command. He directed him to keep a strict watch on the path, and to capture, silently if possible, any one who came up it, but on no account to allow any one to escape back into the valley. He explained that with the balance of the police he himself was going to work down and close the lower exit. When in position he would, if possible, inform Tao Kuang by waving a scarlet flag, but that anyway he must be prepared to act as circumstances should dictate. If he received the signal, Tao Kuang, still remaining concealed, was to place his men so that if necessary they could use their rifles to assist the advance up the valley, and also prevent any escape by the upper path. Mang I further explained that if the pirates appeared to be too strongly posted he would simply starve them out, as the upper and lower exits being secured there was no possibility of escape. Nothing without wings could get out if both ends of the valley were guarded, as the sides were precipitous and even overhung

to a certain extent. He also added that as many of the pirates as possible were to be taken alive, that their punishment might be the more exemplary.

Having made sure that Tao Kuang thoroughly understood his plans, Mang I now moved off to find a way down the hill. It was no easy task, as there was not even a vestige of a path, whilst his guides could no longer assist him. Fortunately he had brought with him some fathoms of strong rope, as before long he came to a spot where there was a sheer descent of fifteen or twenty feet, down which the party had to be lowered singly, the last two men being ordered to go back and rejoin Tao Kuang. This obstacle being safely negotiated, the descent became easier, and by dusk the police had reached a point about two miles below the mouth of the valley.

Mang I had no idea of undertaking night operations, and would not approach nearer before nightfall. He had seen for himself from above that the tortuous entrance to the valley was hemmed in on either hand by high precipitous cliffs, and he had further obtained, on reaching the spot where he had halted, much useful information from two of his own constables. These men had come to him and confessed that in days gone by they had been members of Grey Wolf's gang, but had left him after a serious quarrel. It appeared that on one occasion he, a martinet of

the first water, considered they had been guilty of some dereliction of duty, and had cruelly flogged the pair. From their own point of view this was most unjust, and the injustice had so rankled that they had seized the first opportunity of deserting, and had joined the police in the hope that one day they would get a chance of vengeance. They had said nothing before, as they had not known of the upper way into the valley. The slip had taken place while they were there and had completely blocked the entrance, and the path across had not been cut when they had left the band. Of the lower entrance they told him that at each of the three main curves of the narrow passage there used to be rough but loopholed stone walls, about six feet high, built across from cliff to cliff, entirely shutting the gully. The walls were not in one continuous line, but each consisted of two, which overlapped for rather more than six feet, and were about a yard apart. This afforded means of ingress and egress, but the narrow passage could always be closed when desired by a barrier made of stout planking, which was invariably placed in position and fastened at night. The barrier also had a loophole in it which enabled a man to fire down the passage, or in other words, as we should term it, it enfiladed the rearmost of the two walls. They also informed him that a careful watch was invariably kept at this exit from the valley. The sentry was posted at a spot

whence he could overlook the country for close on a mile, and was provided with glasses. Grey Wolf, too, had in his pay a few men in a village called Sutschia, about three miles distant, whose duty it was to warn the sentry immediately of the approach of any one at all suspicious. The police had managed in this instance to get between the village and the sentry, but Mang I was warned that a couple of men from Sutschia usually visited the valley after dark to give Grey Wolf any information they had learned, and that the departure of a body of police from Haicheng would almost certainly come to his ears. It was true they had come by a shorter route than any messenger to Sutschia could have followed, but the other way was easier, and the extra distance would therefore be neutralised to a very great extent. The best they could hope for was that the information should only have reached Sutschia that afternoon, for Grey Wolf was not the man to take any chances. Should the news have reached him earlier, the probability was great that the only traces of the band would be Ho Kee and Yin Hsing with their throats cut.

Armed with this information, Mang I, as soon as it was dark, advanced cautiously up to the exit, which here narrowed to only a few yards. He closed this by stretching his rope tightly across it, also posting a cordon of sentries, who had orders to allow no one

to pass up or down. These arrangements had scarcely been made when there was a noise of a heavy fall, followed by a guttural exclamation, and a little while later two men were brought before Mang I. They proved to be villagers from Sutschia on their way back from the valley, so the police inspector had every hope that he had the pirates in a trap. The men could give no explanation of their errand, and took refuge in a stolid silence. This was unimportant, however, as the only information they could have given was whether Grey Wolf and his band were actually in the valley, and if news of the police had reached him. Incidentally they might perhaps have mentioned the condition of the prisoners, and if they were alive or dead; but their rescue was of secondary importance to Mang I, his first object being the capture of Grey Wolf. The fact that he and his gang were actually in the valley might tolerably safely be inferred from the appearance of the two men on the road, so the inspector contented himself with having their hands tied behind their backs and their feet shackled. A rope was then made fast to the shackles and passed up round the cord that bound the wrists, the running end being then secured to the waist-belt of one of the sentries. Their final disposal was postponed until the gang had been dealt with.

During the afternoon the sky had clouded over, and distant lightning heralded the

approach of a storm, which broke over the basin soon after midnight. The rain fell in torrents, to the intense discomfort of the police, exposed as they were to its full fury. It was driven by a high wind, almost cyclonic in its strength, which wrecked the poor bivouac the men cowered in, in some cases wrenching away blankets and scattering them over the countryside. When it finally passed over, the police huddled themselves up in the sodden blankets that were left to them, and did their best to get a little sleep on the wet ground. They were astir before dawn, and a small party was sent off under the guidance of the two reformed bandits to attempt the capture of the pirates on watch. They had orders to surround them and prevent their giving the alarm, and for choice to take them alive, as Mang I wanted as many prisoners as possible. The robber guard consisted of three or four men, and was posted on a conspicuous rock about fifty feet high, which was looming darkly through the night, four or five hundred yards away. The only approach to it was a narrow winding path on the farther side, the first few yards of which were almost entirely concealed by thick undergrowth. The party started before there was the faintest glimmer of light in the eastern sky, and reached the near side of the rock without mischance, having seen on their way the figure of the sentry high above them against the skyline.

They now spread out, and as

silently as possible searched for the pathway. It was found at last, and in single file they crept along it, each man carefully parting the bushes before him so that not a rustle should betray them to their prey. It was a task of some minutes, and when they halted at the foot of the ascent a pale light was faintly outlining the slopes of Feng Huang, which towered above them. Just before they started again they heard a loud yawn above their heads, as of a man awaking out of an uneasy sleep, and shortly afterwards some one noisily cleared his throat, whilst a drowsy voice muttered a curse on the storm which had blown down a small shelter under which the men off duty slept, and had wetted them to the skin. The pirate outpost was evidently unsuspecting, and the small party of police crept noiselessly on. The leading man now reached a spot from which he could see over the edge of the rock, which was flat-topped but had a small depression in the centre, forming a sort of basin about fifteen or twenty feet across. The sentry was on the farther edge of the basin, on the brink of the cliff, his back towards them, and leaning sleepily on a rifle. A little to his right were the recumbent forms of three men wrapped in blankets, from which peeped the muzzles of rifles, whilst the basin in between was about a foot deep in water, thus hindering a rush. The top of the rock was entirely devoid of all cover, so that the police could not even collect at the brink preparatory to a

simultaneous dash, whilst the chance of successfully creeping round the edge unseen was negligible. Of course it would have been easy to shoot the men down without further ado, but noise was the one thing to be avoided if the main camp of the robbers was not to be alarmed. However, time was drawing on, and it was decided that the two leaders should make straight for the sentry, and either seize his rifle to prevent his firing and giving the alarm, or, if they could not get hold of the rifle, hurl the man bodily over the cliff, trusting to luck that he would not be able to discharge his piece. In the meantime the remainder of the police would throw themselves on the top of the three sleepers before they could free themselves from their blankets.

The police closed up together as much as possible, and at a whispered word the two foremost constables dashed at the sentry, splashing through the little pond. The man, startled by the noise, turned, and realising the situation raised his weapon. Before he could press the trigger, the leading policeman struck him heavily in the chest with the butt of his rifle. The robber reeled and fell backwards over the edge of the little plateau, but, as he fell, a loud report rang through the morning air, reverberating and echoing from side to side between the steep cliff-like walls that shut in the winding entrance to the valley. The three sleepers were disarmed and bound, and down below Mang I, realising that his only chance of surprise now lay in the

rapidity of his advance up the narrow passage, ordered his party forward in the hopes of securing and passing the barricading walls before they could be manned by Grey Wolf's band.

In this he was partially successful, for his men had just succeeded in breaking down the barrier in the second wall, and were making their way through, when they saw some fifteen men turn a corner about fifty yards away and rush towards them. Those of the police who were past the barricade immediately opened fire, and their opponents hastily retreated back round the corner whence they had emerged, though the fire had been wild and not one of them was hit. Mang I promptly led forward about half of his troop, whilst he directed the remainder to throw down the two lines of walls in his possession, after completing which work they were to join him. As soon, however, as his detachment showed themselves at the corner of the gully round which the pirates had retired, they came under a heavy fire from the third wall, at about a hundred yards' range, and were driven back under cover in their turn, with the loss of a couple of men. The police inspector here showed himself to be resourceful, as he immediately sent back word that the stones from the second wall were to be brought forward to the corner, and a sangar built across the passage, from the cover of which he would be able to bring fire to bear on the barricade still held by the robbers. This new wall

was rather cleverly built by a process somewhat resembling a saphead. The first few blocks were thrown just round the corner till high enough to cover a man lying prone behind them. Materials were then supplied to him, which he pushed forward and placed in position, till a line of stones about a foot high blocked the exit parallel to Grey Wolf's wall. A second layer was now commenced in the same way, and at length, after some hours of work, the wall had risen to a height of three feet.

In the meantime Tao Kuang had been getting busy from his position on the slopes of Feng Huang. He had found a spot from which he could take the pirates lining the barricade in reverse; and though his fire was not accurate enough to cause them any very material damage, it had the effect of distinctly unsettling their minds, and thus appreciably facilitated his commander's work below. It was shortly after midday that Mang I lined as many men as could conveniently use their rifles along the sangar, and opened a brisk fire on the barricade. The robbers replied with spirit for some time; but their supply of ammunition was not unlimited, and consequently before very long their fire dwindled down to a few dropping shots. Mang I now increased the intensity of his fusillade, and under cover of it sent forward a party of about twenty police, who crept round the corner of the sangar and wormed their way over the

ground to the foot of the pirates' defences. The manœuvre was entirely successful, as, owing to the hot fire from both ends of the valley, Grey Wolf's band had been a bit thinned, and those that were left were thinking more of cover for their own skins than of keeping a watch on the movements of the police. These latter, therefore, reached the barricade unobserved, and crouched at its foot.

At a given signal the remainder, with loud shouts, surged over their breastwork; and as the robbers, now roused to the fact that an attack in force was coming, thrust their rifles through the loopholes to repel it, the barrels were seized and wrenched from their hands. As the police, like a wave, engulfed the barricade, their opponents fought desperately with their knives; but their numbers, originally some fifty in all, were too few, and after a furious *mêlée* of about ten minutes' duration, the pirates were overpowered and driven from the barricade. Retiring in knots, they still fought desperately like cornered rats, and it was by no means a bloodless victory that was eventually obtained by the forces of law and order. Resistance was, however, vain; and one by one the bandits were beaten down.

Grey Wolf himself was the last to be captured. He had fled to a cave near the head of the valley when his men broke. Half a dozen or more of the police were hard on his trail, but he had succeeded

in making good his point. The cave was in deep shadow, and as the foremost of his pursuers reached the entrance there was a flash; a report echoed out of the darkness, and the man fell shot through the head. This gave pause to the rest; but collecting together under cover they made a simultaneous rush, for there was a reward of £1s. 5000 on the outlaw's head. Five more flashes in quick succession showed at the cave's mouth, momentarily lighting up the gloom and revealing to his pursuers the robber chief. True to the name he had adopted, he was standing at bay, his lips drawn back, showing his teeth in a snarl so grim that it gave a veritably wolf-like expression to his face, whilst the scar on his cheek stood out a livid bar of white. A smoking revolver in his left hand, in his right he held a gleaming knife, whilst blood was dripping from a wound where a bullet had grazed his temple. Three of the police were writhing on the ground at the threshold of the cave, and the remainder recoiled for a few seconds. As they stood nerving themselves for another attempt, the whole scene might have served as an illustration for Macaulay's lines—

“And from the ghastly entrance,
Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of a dark lair
Where growling low a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.”

The pause was of short duration, and barely ten seconds

elapsed before there was another rush; but a fourth constable fell, a knife thrust in his heart, ere the remainder could fling themselves on their prey and bear him to the ground, still fiercely struggling. Deprived of other weapons, his teeth met in one of his enemies' hands; but there could be only one end, and shortly he was more like a cocoon of rope than a human being. At last, finding himself overwhelmingly overpowered, a stolid mask of impassivity settled over his features, and he seemed to resign himself to his fate; but when he was being carried down from the cave he caught sight of the two self-styled deserters from his band. A wave of concentrated fury and hate passed over him, his calmness dropped from him like a cloak, and once again the scar on his cheek stood out white and livid. In spite of his bonds he struggled so fiercely that his bearers could scarcely hold him, and a torrent of imprecations burst from his lips. He called down the bitterest curses on their heads for black treachery, and the men absolutely wilted under the fire of his anger. It became apparent from their shamed demeanour, and from his furious denunciations, that the story they had told Mang I was a lie, and actually they had joined the police as agents of Grey Wolf and drawn his pay. Realising on arrival at the entrance to the valley that he was trapped, and that his sands were running short, they had determined to betray him

and genuinely throw in their lot with his enemies.

On searching the cave, Ho Kee and Yin Hsing were found, bound fast and still living, though three-parts dead with fright. It was fortunate for them that Grey Wolf had been so closely followed, as there was little doubt but that his intention was to cut their throats before the arrival of the rescue party. They were released, on being identified by Yu Kee to Mang I's satisfaction, and after a short interview aside with the latter. In this they were loud in their admiration of his prowess, and in their protestations of the gratification it would give them to bestow upon him some poor memento of their gratitude for his aid. To be sure it would be quite unworthy of his distinguished acceptance, but if it would not be thought presumptuous on the part of such humble and worthless folk, perhaps the sum of Tls. 1000 apiece would show they were no ingrates. Mang I at first could not hear of such a thing, but in the course of the interview he let it be pretty clearly inferred that he valued his services at, at least, treble the price. After a little more conversation it was agreed that his unofficial *douceur* was to be Tls. 2000 from each of them.

Mang I now collected his prisoners, and proceeded to count the cost. He was fairly well satisfied with his bag on the whole, as he found that half the gang, including Grey Wolf, were living, though there was barely one unwounded, and all, to put it mildly, were a

good deal the worse for wear. Of his police, two had been killed in the first advance, and ten or a dozen in the fighting that followed the storming of the barricade, whilst one man had been shot dead and one stabbed by Grey Wolf in his last stand, and a score or so were suffering from knife or bullet wounds, five or six being pretty seriously injured. Still thirty or forty casualties was not a very stiff price for the capture of Grey Wolf and his band. The valley was now searched, and the property stolen from Liu-shou-ying recovered, and in addition a good deal more of valuable merchandise, the proceeds of other robberies. This was collected at Mang I's bivouac at the entrance to the valley, the prisoners, in spite of their wounds, being forced to carry it down and stack it.

The next morning he marched to Sutschia and rounded up the inhabitants. Here he secured a dozen men who were said to have been Grey Wolf's spies, and who were added to the number of his captives. It may have been a coincidence that these were the most poverty-stricken of the village, whilst those who proved their innocence to his satisfaction were curiously eager to present him with a mark of their appreciation of his valour in destroying this nest of evil-doers. Perhaps it

should rather be taken as an apt illustration of our proverb, "Honesty is the best policy," for certainly those arrested had not prospered. They marched now by easy stages to Haicheng, Grey Wolf being carried in a large square cage, the sides formed of stout wooden bars, with a hole at the top through which his head protruded. The height of the cage was such that his feet barely touched the bottom boards, so that though he was spared the fatigue of walking, his journey can scarcely be described as an easy one. The roads were rough, and when his bearers stumbled—a not infrequent occurrence—he was swung off his feet, and was suspended by his head. At every village at which the procession halted he was a target for the small boys, so that he was a sorry-looking wreck when he reached the yamen at Haicheng. His trial may be said to have consisted of a sentence only, which was that he and his band were to be taken to Liu-shou-ying and executed on the scene of their crime. Over the details it were best to draw a veil, though it may be added that the Tao-tai kept his word to the two guides, who were set free after undergoing a flogging followed by a year's imprisonment, during which they frequently meditated with regret on Grey Wolf's end.

E. F. KNOX, *Lieut.-Col.*

BAGPIPE BALLADS.

I. "MACLEOD'S LAMENT."

ALLAN IAN ÒG MACLEOD of Raasay,
Treasure of mine, lies yonder dead in Loos,
His body unadorned by Highland raiment,
Trammelled, for glorious hours, in Saxon trews.
Never man before of all his kindred
Went so appavelled to the burial knowe,
But with the pleated tartan for his shreuding,
The bonnet on his brow.

My grief! that Allan should depart so sadly,
When no wild mountain pipe his bosom wrung,
With no one of his race beside his shoulder,
Who knew his history and spoke his tongue.
Ah! lonely death and drear for darling Allan!
Before his ghost had taken wings and gone,
Loud would he cry in Gaelic to his gallants,
"Children of storm, press on!"

Beside him, when he fell there in his beauty,
Macleods of all the islands should have died;
Brave hearts his English!—but they could not fathom
To what old deeps the voice of Allan cried;
When in that strange French countryside war-battered,
Far from the creeks of home and hills of heath,
A boy, he kept the old tryst of his people
With the dark girl Death.

Oh Allan Ian Òg! Oh Allan aluinn!
Sore is my heart remembering the past,
And yeu of Raasay's ancient gentle children
The farthest-wandered, noblest and last.
It should have been the brave dead of the islands
That heard ring o'er their tombs your battle-cry,
To shake them from their sleep again, and quicken
Peaks of Terriden and Skye!

Gone like the mist the brave Macleods of Raasay,
Far furth from fortune, sundered from their lands,
And now the last grey stone of Castle Raasay
Lies desolate and levelled with the sands;
But pluck the old isle from its roots deep planted
Where tides cry coronach round the Hebrides,
And it will bleed of the Macleods lamented,
Their loves and memories!

II. "THE BRATTIE."¹

The brattie for sweepin', the brattie for dirt!
 Tie on your brattie and tuck up your shirt!
 It's always the case when there's cleanin' to do
 That the first for the besom's the Bonnets o' Blue.
 Once we were gentry and cleaned in the kilt,
 Wi' a braw Heilan' sporran and money intil't;
 Now deil to the sporran! and tartan's napoo,
 It's ower guid for the work and it's put out o' view
 Below the brown brattie for sweepin'!

The mothers that bore us—the best ever stept!
 Were up in the mornin' when other folk slept;
 Do ye think they were deckin' themsel's in the glass,
 Or plannin' diversions to make the day pass?
 Na, na! the wee mothers, the dainty and dour,
 Were up at revally to fight wi' the stour—
 That the hame might be tidy, the children be spruce,
 They swept like the winds o' the hill through the house,
 And bonny they looked in their bratties!

Dirt will come down on ye, do what ye can,
 And cleanin' a steadin' 's a task for a man,
 So we're up like our mothers at screich o' the dawn,
 Sark's rolled to the elbows and aprons on.
 The thing to make Europe as clean as a whistle
 'S a besom o' heath frae the land o' the thistle—
 A besom o' heath and a wash o' the sea,
 The breeks for our sailors, for us the bare knee,
 And the brattie, the brattie o' Sootland!

If ever we fight wi' true gentry again,
 We'll go in full tartan and meet them like men:
 Our sporrans 'll glitter, our tartans 'll wave,
 To honour a foe that is gallant and brave;
 But for muckin' a midden, and cleanin' out swine
 That's needin' a duckin' in water o' Rhine,
 It were silly to dress in our Sunday array,
 So we'll dress like our work, as our mothers would say,
 And that's wi' the bonny brown brattie!

III. "THE TOCHERLESS LASS."

Drumore has a leash of daughters, and wants men for the three;
 Six milch-cows go with Juliet, and a mare of pedigree;
 With Bell a score of wethers, and a share in the fishing smack,
 And nothing at all with Anna but the shift upon her back.

¹ The brattie is the khaki apron of the Highland corps.

Like a deer on the hill is Juliet, high breast and proud command ;

There's not a tree that's more composed, stands on her father's land ;

A lad might well surrender to that quick and tempting eye,
With six milch-cows at pasture, and a fine strong mare forbye.

There is not in all broad Albyn, no, nor in the realm of France,
The like of Bell the dainty one when she steps out to dance ;
She sings to beat the thrush at morn, over her milking-dish,
And she has the black-faced wethers, and an eighth-part of the fish.

But there's something about Anna like a fine day in June,
Though I cannot put the words to 't I could whistle 't to a tune ;
The king himself would cock his hat, and stop for to admire,
Even if she were a gipsy by a roadside fire.

Oh ! cunning man is Cameron of Drumore, I know him well !
It's the best bird of the cleeking he would keep last to himsel' ;
Two-thirds of Patriek's family I would not have in gift ;
When he brings them to the market, I'll have Anna in her shift !

IV. "FRASER'S FAREWELL."

Hail to thee and fare-thee-well !

Unstable, cold as sleet ;

Broken is the ancient spell

That kept me at your feet.

I know now how the land beguiles,

How cunning is the sea ;

It was the magic of the isles

Alone bedazzled me.

The birken trees with sly intent

Waved round your walk their grace,

Majestic mountains e'er you leant

Transfiguring your face.

Perfumes that from the moor arise,

I thought came from your hair ;

It was the sea looked in your eyes,

And left its blueness there.

That voice so sweet on heathy ben

Which now my heart recalls,—

Naught but the glamour of the glens

Sounding with waterfalls !

Maternal Nature's petted child,
Tricked out to dupe and please,
All false with fascinations wild,
Lent by the Hebrides;

Those very raptures I confessed,
Contemplating your mind,
Were but the influence of the mist,
The star-shine and the wind.

Farewell! the bagpipe's battle air
At last awakens me—
It summons from those isles to where
A true love beckons me.

For me there is no wizardry
But under Highland skies,
And steadfastness must ever be
In danger's bold true eyes!

V. "LOCHABER NO MORE!"

Farewell to Lochaber, farewell to the glen,
No more will he wander Lochaber again.
Lochaber no more! Lochaber no more!
The lad will return to Lochaber no more!
The trout will come back from the deeps of the sea,
The bird from the wilderness back to the tree,
Flowers to the mountain and tides to the shore,
But he will return to Lochaber no more!

O why should the hills last, that never were young,
Unperishing stars in the heavens be hung;
Be constant the seasons, undrying the stream,
And he that was gallant be gone like a dream?
Brave songs will be singing in isles of the West,
But he will be silent who sang them the best;
The dance will be waiting, the pipes will implore,
But he will return to Lochaber no more!

Child of the forest! profound is thy sleep,
The valley that loved thee awakes but to weep;
When our fires are rekindled at dawn of the morn,
Our griefs burn afresh, and our prayers are forlorn;
The night falls disconsolate, bringing no peace,
No hope for our dreams, for our sighs no release;
In vain come the true hearts and look from the door,
For thou wilt return to Lochaber no more!

Noctes Ambrosianæ.

No. LXXIII.

XPH Δ'ΕΝ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΩ ΚΥΛΙΚΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΝΙΣΣΟΜΕΝΑΩΝ
 ΗΔΕΑ ΚΩΤΙΔΑΟΝΤΑ ΚΑΘΜΕΝΟΝ ΟΙΝΟΠΙΟΤΑΖΕΙΝ.

Σ.

PHOC. *ap. Ath.*

[*This is a distich by wise old Phocylides,
 An ancient who wrote crabbed Greek in no silly days;
 Meaning, "TIS RIGHT FOR GOOD WINEBIBBING PEOPLE,
 NOT TO LET THE JUG PACE ROUND THE BOARD LIKE A CRIPPLE;
 BUT GAILY TO CHAT WHILE DISCUSSING THEIR TIPPLE."*
*An excellent rule of the hearty old cock 'tis—
 And a very fit motto to put to our Noctes.]*

C. N. *ap. Ambr.*

[*Scene—The Saloon. Time—10 P.M. or thereabouts. The walls are adorned by the familiar portraits of JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART, JOHN WILSON, JAMES HOGG, "DELTA," and others. The bust of WILSON, with its flowing locks, and the bust of AYTOUN, with its massive Roman head, dominate the scene from one side of the room, while from the mantelpiece on the other, the miniature effigy of the young Buonaparte looks on inscrutably. The window in the roof is carefully obscured. A kettle is singing cheerfully on the fire. On the round table in the centre stand a frugal dessert in the shape of three cabin biscuits, the "materials," and a lordly bowl for mixing the same. Enter the MUSER, the CELT, and the PROFESSOR, who, after divesting themselves of their outer garments, seat themselves at the table.]*

THE CELT.

I protest I am glad to be here in safety. I am not very fond of groping my way along your Edinburgh streets on these black nights. A night like this makes one long for a blink of MacFarlane's lantern.

THE MUSER.

For my part, I welcome this return to an ancient habit. There may be a risk on a dark night in dodging these abominations, the motor-buses, which minister to our foolish craving for speed. But at last we have been permitted to look upon a London which belonged to simpler, happier days, a London whose mysterious beauty was not yet debauched by electric lights and sky signs. And your streets, too, I suppose, are no darker than in the old days, when the revellers of the Noctes "oxtered" each other home in the small hours from Picardy Place.

THE CELT.

There is one thing, it is perfectly certain, of which Wilson and Lockhart had no experience, and that is, a Zeppelin raid. I doubt if they would have enjoyed it, though I should like to have heard Lockhart on the new German hymn:—

“Du der über Cherubinen,
Seraphinen, Zeppelininen,
In der höchsten Höhe tronest.”

THE PROFESSOR.

As a specimen of the religious poetry of the Boche the passage is unrivalled.

THE CELT.

The mystery to me has always been, not that “the terror by night” does so much damage, but that it does so little. It must indeed be a glorious sight to see one of those infernal machines come down.

THE MUSER.

True it is that curiosity gets the better of fear, and more than one have been killed or wounded merely because they could not resist the temptation to see the new thing.

THE CELT.

Poke the fire, Professor, man, and keep an eye on the kettle while I sing a stave to ‘Maga’ on her centenary. The regulations of the Board of Control have caused us far greater inconvenience than all the Zeppelins; yet need we complain if they have sent us to a haven of refuge such as this? What meeting-place could be more appropriate for ‘Maga’s’ devoted and adoring servants desirous of celebrating her hundredth birthday with all the honours? Surely these are haunts meet for Apollo (*sings*):—

A HEALTH TO ‘MAGA.’

(ON HER CENTENARY.)

BY ALFRED NOYES.

Great shipmen launched her in the glorying Forth,
Her flag the four winds know,
And out she buffeted through the morning gold
A hundred years ago.

Pledge, first, the challenging heart for friend and foe
That this tall ship still bears,
Freighted with songs unsung, and tales untold,
After a hundred years.

"Friends may be fit," they say, "but they'll be few,
Unless the good ship hourly shifts and veers,
To please each fool-spun weather-vane of mode."
Look at her hundred years.

Where cardinal birds, in dog-wood trees aflower,
Flame overhead, her golden freight appears;
Her mellowing tales, moon after moon they come,
Rich with her hundred years.

In ports, where Fleet Street flags but seldom fly,
You'll find her friends on all the world-end piers:
A little throng, waiting the ship from home,
To pledge her hundred years.

Moon after moon, she makes the tale complete,
And all those friends, as round the world she steers,
That know not, care not, how the fashions reign,
Drink to her hundred years.

Pledge, then, the mellowing strength that never fails
In laughter or in tears,
The honour, the clean loyalty,
Of all her hundred years.

THE MUSER.

To 'Maga'—the only Indispensable.

*[The punch being now compounded,
all drink the toast solemnly.]*

THE PROFESSOR.

You are very right, sir, in what you were saying. We cannot look round this saloon without being vividly reminded of the great men, our predecessors. The place is haunted by their ghosts: and their ghosts are honest, aye and merry, ghosts, that let me tell you! Their influence seems to "perfume the very room," like Mackintosh's claret at the Hawes Inn. Truly here more than anywhere else may be found our "spiritual home."

[A long pause of consternation.]

THE MUSER.

A most vile phrase, Professor. I am surprised to hear it escape your lips.

THE PROFESSOR.

A vile phrase enough, I grant you; but immortal if only because it will perpetuate the name of Herr Ballin's *fidus Achates*, its true begetter.

THE CELT.

Pass the sugar, please—what there is of it. The name does not matter a doit, and what our friend, as I take it, means to say is, that, if you go through the pages of the Magazine during the century of its existence, you cannot fail to be struck by its wonderful continuity of tone and spirit.

THE PROFESSOR.

Precisely what I intended to say. Circumstances vary infinitely. What is wholesome food for the body politic to-day may be poison for it to-morrow. But there need be no variation in temper and "point of view," and, if you try to sum up the lifelong policy of 'Maga' from 1817 to 1917, I scarcely think you could do it better than in the motto, "Down with the Intellectuals!"

THE MUSER AND THE CELT (*together*).

Hear, hear, hear!

THE PROFESSOR.

There never was such a clever set of fellows as the original 'Edinburgh' reviewers a hundred years since. Many of them could write vigorous and manly English forbye, which is a good deal more than the clever fellows of to-day seem capable of doing. Not that they could touch the classic beauty of John Lockhart's prose, which was as much beyond their attainment as the depths of Lockhart's mind were beyond their sounding. Still, they knew their trade as journalists, and Jeffrey, for one, makes capital reading.

THE MUSER.

I agree, and it is to Jeffrey's credit that he never pretends to be other than he is, and leaves the "high-flying" business to others. All the same, he had the true "intellectual" characteristics, which an overpowering infusion of the Philistine no more served to counteract than it did in Macaulay. There is a great parade of common-sense, a great deal of fuss about having no illusions. But your genuine "Intellectual" hates, beyond everything else, looking at the facts of human nature and human life. He lives in a world peopled by conventional chimeras; a world in which the species as we know it is conspicuous by its absence; a world in which men whom we can recognise as our fellow-creatures play no part. What he really loves is fine phrases, the sparkling epigram, the unlooked-for antithesis, the paradox which is the deadliest commonplace. You must have observed that in every age there is a current slang of fine phrases in which your "Intellectual" revels.

THE PROFESSOR.

Even now the Radicals, who from the first have proved their incapacity to think or to do, refuse to give up the game. They are grinding their axes to a sharp point, that when peace comes they may begin over again their futile fight against the facts of life. Having refused to help in the war themselves, and having done their best to hinder others, they now pretend that peace will bring us all a new heaven and a new earth. I don't know what their new heaven would be like, but the mere thought of their new earth makes me shudder. An earth where vaccination is unknown, and where the infected may spread smallpox as they will, in the sacred name of freedom; an earth where the women are permitted to outvote the men; an earth where the Sinn Feiners are encouraged amiably to conspire with the enemies of Great Britain, and are patted on the back by the Prime Minister; an earth, in fact, where every crank shall thrive, where every fanatic shall be greeted as a wise man and shall wear the bay leaves in his dank hair.

THE MUSER.

Happily, they will be disappointed, every crank of them. After war there shall be peace in the old unchanging earth we know and love, and this particular corner of it will be all the better for the millions of returned soldiers, who have looked death in the face, and know well the worth of canting aspirations.

THE PROFESSOR.

Here is an extract from a letter from an old contributor in Ireland: "Nothing could exaggerate the state of things in Ireland. But we will worry through. Every one is praising Lloyd George's clever speech, and his high-minded declaration that the wickedness 'of coercing Ulster is unthinkable.' People have short memories. In 1914 it was the very thing that he and his friends were bent upon, not thinking of. The only reason they call it 'unthinkable' now is that they found it couldn't be done—even before the war. What hypocrites politicians are! I am of course intensely relieved at the change in their minds. Yet it does not blind me one bit—as to the worth of their convictions."

THE MUSER.

They truckled to the Irish as they truckled to the Germans.

THE CELT.

Truckling is the devil.

THE PROFESSOR.

Truckling is servile submission to the will of another.

THE MUSER.

After all, politicians who climb into the Cabinet are not as a rule gifted above their fellows—they are only a little less honest. There are exceptions—those who, like Mr Balfour, are born lucky; and Mr Bonar Law, who was thrown up by force of circumstances; but men of integrity do not flatter and lie, and so are debarred from the service of their country—or were till the war winnowed the chaff from the wheat.

THE PROFESSOR.

Thank God, 'Maga' has lived to see a time when patriotism is no longer scoffed at. Never can I forget how near we came to shame and defeat. The immortal three days in August 1914, *dies mirabiles*, when England's honour was held furtively in the balance, will never fade from the minds of men. There was a rumour then that even the leaders of the Tory party were caught playing an innocent game of lawn-tennis at the very crisis of their country's fate.

THE CELT.

It reminds you of Drake and Hawkins at bowls with the Armada in sight.

THE PROFESSOR.

The Tory leaders, at any rate, repented their levity, and saw their duty clear and whole in an instant. I wish the Radicals had been as wisely inspired. Their one hope and aim was to shift the burden of responsibility on to somebody else's shoulders. Do you remember how the brisk young Liberals hastily gathered the opinions of the great ones, who wanted peace at any price, and poured the shameful medley into the congenial columns of 'The Daily News'? Many of those who did their best to drag England into the pit of disgrace are ardent patriots now, and slap their chests in manly pride as though they had never courted disaster.

THE MUSER.

The true quality of the "Intellectual" comes out very clearly in his attitude to his country. It may be patronisingly benevolent; it may be very much the reverse. The 'Edinburgh' reviewers kept well on the shady side of benevolence. I forget whether it is to Brougham or to Jeffrey that there attaches the infamy of the notorious article on the Convention of Cintra. Rank cowardice was its chief note, and we know the effect it produced upon Sir Walter. The "Intellectual" thinks it his primary business to be "detached," as his odious jargon has it.

THE PROFESSOR.

I have never known him to be "detached" from the gear in his own private affairs. As often as not, he is a bit of a "pincher."

THE CELT.

The best of them all was surely the high-browed one who saw from the sheer height of his intellectuality the golden guineas pouring over his coward country. "Let us preserve the peace," he said, "and trade with both belligerents. Then no harm shall touch us, and we will keep our finances sound." 'Twas then I wished I had still my dirk!

THE PROFESSOR.

Yes, truly that was one of the "great thoughts" inspired by the war. It will be handed down, let us hope, to remote posterity with those other two imbecilities—"business as usual" and "too proud to fight." Human folly has never set up to itself finer monuments than these. And let us not forget the pious editor who showed his profound knowledge of history and politics by announcing to his patient flock that the struggle which convulsed Europe was not worth to us the bones of a single grenadier. He, too, deserves a niche in that temple of fame which is reserved for them who, darkly ignorant of life and affairs, aspire to hand on the lessons of Cimmerian nothingness to others.

THE MUSER.

Every one of us will preserve his own image of those unforgettable days. I was in the country, and the scanty news which came to us by the telegraph did little enough to reassure us. We knew that Sir Edward Grey, that eminent fisherman, was busily employed in explaining to the whole world that England was under no obligation either to herself or to others. It is difficult to understand the mind of a man who, when France seemed to be threatened by a *débâcle* more grimly appalling than that of 1870, should bring no message of help or hope to our friend, but should insist upon having it set down in writing that for Great Britain the Entente was a meaningless, unbinding word. And Sir Edward Grey went further than that. He was not sure that the invasion of Belgium would be for England a sufficient cause of war. Thus we had every reason for distrust, and when Monday morning came we feared, justly enough, that never again would an Englishman dare to show his dishonoured face upon the Continent of Europe; that we should perforce become Islanders for very shame.

THE PROFESSOR.

There you see the true curse of democracy, which appoints leaders, and then deprives them of all power to think or act.

THE MUSER.

And even when Sir Edward Grey began his speech on the most famous bank-holiday that ever will be known to history, I don't believe that he knew whether before he sat down it

would be peace or war. He gathered courage as he went on from the House, whose courage was already hardening. And the members had caught their courage from, outside, a fact which shows that the spirit of England is always better and braver than the spirit of those who find profit in her government. However, the first half of Sir Edward Grey's speech, which appeared in a country evening paper, filled us with the gravest apprehension, and we went to bed convinced that we should wake up on the morrow dishonoured and at peace. Happy were we, indeed, when we discovered that after all the House of Commons had found some sort of soul, and that an ultimatum had sped to Germany.

THE PROFESSOR.

I think yours was the common experience. So little trust had Britain in the righteousness of her rulers that, north and south, east and west, all men were haunted by the same fear of cowardice and broken faith.

THE MUSER.

But even Sir Edward Grey's speech and the general feeling of the House did not convince me so strongly as a scene I witnessed when the time of parley expired. By chance I was passing the vast mansion in Carlton House Terrace, where Prince Lichnowsky had entertained London, and flattered himself into the belief that England and Germany were friends. It was twelve o'clock at night, and a carpenter was gravely unscrewing the brass plate which explained to the world that there stood the German Embassy. This simple act symbolised the coming war as speeches and letters and ambassadorial reports could never symbolise it. After that there was no going back. And all those who think it matters whether we lead our own lives or not, who believe that it is worth while to fight for honour or an idea, must have felt, in the certainty of war, an infinite relief.

THE CELT.

Some there are who won't learn, like Jenkins' cuddy, and three years of war have taught nothing to the intrepid spirits who were all agog to sell their country for a mess of pottage. When they saw that the brilliant hope of trading with both belligerents, of getting money out of other men's blood, was hoped in vain, they turned them about, and discovered the great truth that war could be waged without soldiers. So they cried aloud: Save the voluntary principle or we perish! They did not fear a German victory. What they did fear was that every Briton of military age should be compelled to defend his own citizenship. For them man was a voting and not a fighting animal. His duties began and ended at the polling booth, and they thought, poor bodies, that if Great Britain were invaded, her citizens would throng about her with ballot-papers

in their hands, and by an enormous majority send the invading Germans back to their ships again.

THE MUSER.

Canning and Frere have embalmed the type in imperishable verse. The "highbrow" thinks he shows his superiority by posing as "the friend of every country but his own." He despises the instincts of the unsophisticated patriot. "Are you quite sure," he ingenuously inquires, "of this?" Or, "Are you certified of that?" Not but what common, vulgar patriotism sometimes breaks in, and asserts itself amid all the chatter about "nationality," and "nationalism," and "internationalism," and "leagues of peace," and projects for controlling the peoples and passions of Europe by means of a handful of police. No; to be quite fair, *all* Intellectuals do not hate their country, however maladroit they may be in the manner in which they testify their affection. But whether they love, or whether they hate, they have less of the root of the matter in them—less instinct for the truth of a situation, less power to divine the essentials of a conjuncture—than the humblest private in the New Army.

THE CELT.

Yet the strange thing is that the "intellectual" type of mind flourishes among the learned, or rather the half-learned. You would have thought that the lore of the ages should be a sufficient safeguard against that sort of maggot. Yet there are several awful warnings whom I need not specify.

THE PROFESSOR.

My dear friend, our Schools and Colleges of learning are thoroughly sound from top to bottom. The foul residuum of conscientious objectors is negligible, both numerically and otherwise, though it *has* made a disagreeable smell in the world. Yet the wonder to me is that the taint has not struck deeper. For I must sorrowfully admit that many Schoolmasters and Professors have developed a fondness for indulging in cant and nonsense which does little credit to their good sense. Look at the proceedings at the "Conferences" on Education which the newspapers dutifully report at the end of the Christmas holidays. What orgies of pompous ineptitude! What "Thyestean banquets of claptrap"!

THE CELT.

Yet I daresay the dominies return to their work all the better for this blowing off of steam, like a gillie I one time had, who could keep teetotal only so long as his wife let him play the bagpipes after every meal in the kitchen.

THE MUSER.

The worst is that, while the cranks air their views, and are extolled in leading articles, the sensible members of the pro-

fession, who far outnumber them, steadfastly hold their tongues. I grant, however, that it is difficult to know in these days how to deal with the noisy and obtrusive inhabitants of Crotchet Castle. To snub or to soft-sawder—that is the question. Is it better to reply or to ignore?

THE CELT.

I am for ignoring. It wounds most, for vanity is the master passion of many men besides my Lord Haldane.

THE MUSER.

You must remember the great “movement,” the gallant crusade of our youth, for “elevating the social status” of the actor?

THE PROFESSOR.

Perfectly.

THE MUSER.

Well, I fear we are about to be confronted by another such movement, this time for elevating the social status of the teacher?

THE PROFESSOR.

By heavens! the very idea is a detestable insult. Let me call to mind two men who have passed away within the last twelve months: James Leigh Strachan-Davidson and William Turner. The one a Scots laird with all the qualities of the best kind of Englishman, the other an Englishman with all the best qualities characteristic of the Scot. How they despised the busybodies and the mischief-makers who throng the seats of learning! Can you imagine either of them appearing at Conferences and bellowing about “reconstruction”? Can you imagine either of them wallowing in the shallow and sentimental optimism which proclaims that after peace comes the millennium? No, a thousand times no!

THE CELT.

Yet, from all I have ever heard, these two, each in his own sphere, did more for education than most of the talkers?

THE MUSER.

When all's said and done, the great mark of the “Intellectual” is that he learns nothing and forgets nothing. He was hopelessly wrong in all his forecasts before the war. But is he downhearted? No! He prophesies away as gaily to-day as if his “tips” had always come right. And he expects people to take his word.

THE PROFESSOR.

Which is what the nation is not going to do. But the rest of us—what changes the war has made in our lives and in our view of life!

THE MUSER.

And surely history shows no change so swift and so sheer as Mr Asquith's fall. Within four-and-twenty hours the indispensable Minister was as if he had never been. He and his friends and his hangers-on, and his secretaries and his place-hunters, and his candidates for easily-won honours, faded away like a mist before the sun. But at last we had the chance of prosecuting the war with courage and energy; a sigh of relief went up from every corner of the Empire; and little trace of the old gang was left upon our minds but a bitter regret that for two years we had waited for a vision of victory which never came.

THE PROFESSOR.

Even Russia has got rid of her Asquiths.

THE CELT.

But the danger is not all over yet. The old gang will use all its cunning to recover the spoils of office. Already we hear rumours that Mr Churchill is to preside over this committee and Mr Montagu over that. Now we have as little need of Mr Churchill as of Mr Montagu, and we can only hope that our new Prime Minister will have the pluck to forget old friendships and to turn his back resolutely upon the placemen whose narrow-minded pedantry came near to wrecking the Empire.

THE PROFESSOR.

You remember that when the marble halls of the National Liberal Club were first inhabited by a mob of active young clerks of either sex, those who should have known told us gravely that a blow had been struck at the Radical cause, from which it would never recover. Indeed, it was but a dead horse which stopped the blow. Radicalism died in August 1914 of heart-failure. But Mr Asquith, a cunning parliamentarian, survived his cause.

THE CELT.

He and his friends skilfully put it about that the retirement of any one of them would be a national disaster.

THE MUSER.

The Professor spoke just now of the National Liberal Club. I did not know what that Club meant to the brisk young Liberals, and to the potential enemies of England whom they welcomed as members, until I read the panegyric pronounced by Herr Carl Hans Stielow, who for twenty years lived in London as a correspondent of the Berlin 'Lokalanzeiger,' and who enjoyed the freedom of a spy in the marmoreal palace in Whitehall. He has expressed his gratitude to it as well as a Boche can ever express it. He has sung a pæan of praise to "the hospitable, wonderful, marble halls and libraries, which with truly Liberal great-heartedness stood open to all representatives of intellectual labour, without distinction of race, nation, or religion." He

will never forget, says he, "the friends and spiritual comrades with whom he associated there, and lived edifying hours of common work for the progress of mankind."

THE PROFESSOR.

So the egregious Herr Stielow found a spiritual home, as did another distinguished gentleman, and I'll wager that he made far better use of his opportunities than ever Lord Haldane did. Lord Haldane, indeed, wrapped up in his silent mind all that he had learned in Berlin.

THE MUSER.

But the Boche is not easily satisfied, and Herr Stielow was gravely disappointed when "the beautiful and splendid centre of intellectualism and humanity, which, through heroes of intellect like Cobden, Bright, Gladstone, and many others, has illuminated the world," was forced at last by the pressure of English opinion to abandon its love of Germany. Hitherto it had been faithfully cosmopolitan; it had preached assiduously the doctrine of free trade, upon which the prosperity of the Huns was firmly established; and if only it had remained a centre of Germanism in an arid waste of honourable patriotism, all might have been well for Herr Stielow and the Club itself. "How beautiful," exclaims the Hunnish rhapsodist, "it would have been if the Club had resisted the powers of sinister Jingoism, and in the midst of the storm had held high the ideal principles of Liberalism!" Truly the Sybarites of the marble halls did their best. They vaunted their friendship with Germany loud enough; and they are praying in the cold discomfort of the Westminster Palace Hotel that the happy days will soon come back, when they shall meet their German friends once again in "the beautiful and splendid centre," and shall re-establish the prosperity of the Boches upon the solid foundation of friendly commerce.

THE PROFESSOR.

We may be sure of one thing, that, as soon as peace is signed, Herr Stielow and his kind will all scurry back to "the citadel of Liberalism" like rabbits to their burrow, and will be ready once more to pick up all the news, which may be useful in the next war.

THE MUSER.

Indeed the Germans were so certain of Liberal sympathy that at the outset they did not trouble to resign from the marble Club. "In the first days of the war," Herr Stielow tells us, "I went calmly to the Club, but soon I heard from my friends that it would be better to stay away." I know not which to wonder at the more—the forbearance of his friends or his own insolence. Does the eminent journalist believe that Englishmen, even in the first days, would have been permitted to come and go, to listen as they pleased, in the political clubs of

Germany? But we know by this time that the Boches expect of others what they would never grant themselves, and Herr Stielow is even persuaded to pity the National Liberal Club for its lack of magnanimity. "Poor National Liberal Club!" Thus he laments. "You never dreamed that your days also were numbered. Driven from its wonderful palace, it now ekes out its existence—a shadow of its former greatness and power. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*"

THE PROFESSOR.

Sic transit, indeed! And with the National Liberal Club something else besides marble halls and libraries is gone for ever. There have passed away the principles, if principles they may be called, which informed the Club where the hats and coats of the members were safest, if put away in a cloak-room, and where, says rumour, the soap was chained up. And all the gang which professed those principles, and which preached the doctrine, pure and undefiled, of cheapness and nastiness, has vanished from the earth. The glory of Mr Asquith and all his friends has passed out of sight, with the beautiful and splendid centre, illuminated by the heroes of intellect afore-mentioned.

THE MUSER.

We have been told that the war has disclosed many weaknesses. It is *la faillite des rois*, says one. Says another, it will be fought in vain, if it be not a war upon war. These are empty phrases, of more sound than sense. What the war has discovered to our purblind eyes is the bankruptcy of democracy. We know enough already to understand how the foolish adherence to what was never better than a makeshift, an open confession of weakness, has tied our hands and crippled our energies. When the war is over we must do our best to revise our foolish form of government, and if a wise reaction prove impossible we must revert boldly to the sound ideals of Young England, and reknit the bonds which bound together those natural allies—labour and the country gentlemen of England.

THE PROFESSOR.

You are quite right. It is true that for ten years the middle-class Liberals have thrown dust in the eyes of the working men. They have told them that they—the middle-class Liberals—were the true friends of labour. They have forbidden them to protect the product of their work in the very moment of encouraging them to protect the work itself. So all the restraints and illegalities of trade-unions did not help them to find employment or to secure high wages, because the work which they might profitably have done themselves was done in Germany, in Denmark, or in the United States. But they are opening their eyes at last. They are

beginning to see that the Free Trade of Cobden, which was designed to ensure low wages and cheap living, is no policy for them.

THE CELT.

But let us desert the barren field of politics for a while and turn our eyes to the stage. There, too, the influence of the war is felt. It is true that war-time is an interlude for the arts, and that we cannot expect masterpieces when the youth of the country is in the trenches. But it must be admitted that the theatre has lost an excellent chance of proving its worth and usefulness.

THE MUSER.

I agree with you. The managers assumed at once that the soldiers, at home on leave, had left all their wits behind them in France. And so they prepared for them a kind of entertainment which was fit only for imbeciles and very young children. The thing, which they call a revue, is very ill-named. It "reviews" nothing. It has neither satire nor wit. It is a hideous cross between the primitive music-hall and the Christmas pantomime of our early youth. The army of authors which conspires to produce it takes the lowest possible measure of its audience, and thinks that old jokes and costly trappings are enough for success.

THE PROFESSOR.

But even the "producers" seem to be losing confidence in their wares. Did you see the confession, made the other day by one manager, that the only reason why he spent so much money upon his vulgar scenery was that he could not rely upon the wit of his authors?

THE MUSER.

Yes, I read the pitiful acknowledgment of error. But frankly, I don't believe in it. If the managers were not all sunk deep in the rut of habit, they could contrive something far better than the foolish things they call "revues." Do you remember the old burlesques of our boyhood, which made the Gaiety Theatre a place of amiable resort? They at least were held together by a thin thread of continuity; they did pretend to cast a casual eye upon the happenings of the day. They were, in fact, if I may use Matthew Arnold's phrase, "a criticism of life."

THE PROFESSOR.

Indeed they were, though I have no doubt that if to-day you tried to read the punning couplets of Reece you would find them sorry stuff.

THE MUSER.

No doubt I should. But that is not quite the point. The old burlesques were written not to be read but to be acted. And their authors had the sense to adapt the old fairy tales to modern uses. They kept a quick eye fixed on the follies of the

day, and they knew as well as most the true purposes of satire. Besides, remember how beautifully the burlesques were acted! It was not the case of the popular "star" doing a little song and dance of his own in a corner. The actors and actresses who made the "Forty Thieves" and the other triumphant successes worked loyally together, and knew, like the artists that they were, the results which they wanted to produce. Even if Terry and Royce, Nelly Farren and Kate Vaughan, Connie Gilchrist and Phyllis Broughton, could return to the stage, they would all be wanted in "revues" and asked to play the only part which is popular to-day, of the imbecile laughing through a horse-collar.

THE PROFESSOR.

And I am sure that the manager's policy of eking out the poverty of his author's wit by loading the stage with scenery which could not dazzle the eyes of children, casts a slur upon the public. The soldiers home from the war are capable of appreciating true humour if only they were given a chance. They don't believe that amusement can only be obtained by a shocking medley of foolish trappings and witless dialogue.

THE CELT.

And now I hear that in mitigation of infantile "revues," some enterprising and subsidised theatre has put on a translation of M. Brioux' portentous sermon, which is known in English as "Damaged Goods." The thing is not dramatic at all. Only a blind courtesy could pretend it a play, and it is not easy to understand what good purpose it serves. It is nothing more than a series of monstrous sermonisings upon a subject which nobody wants to hear discussed in public. To call such a piece of solemn pedantry an "entertainment" is a mockery, and nothing else. Even if it "did good," it would do it in the wrong way.

THE PROFESSOR.

And the worst of it is that it is put upon the stage now in the vain hope that it may hasten the passage through Parliament of a very dangerous Bill. If we are asked to choose between "Damaged Goods" and the last "revue," we would prefer the revue. But I don't understand why such an alternative should be put to the soldier in search of amusement.

THE MUSER.

I am entirely of your opinion. The soldier is neither a fool nor a prig. He is a joyous, cheerful soul, who naturally prefers wit to Ibsen, and is fobbed off with mere childishness, or with pompous moralities.

THE CELT.

Thank God, the sodger has not the "intellectual" maggot. Here's a daft South German novelist, Rudolf Stratz, proudly pointing out the superiority of the German view of life and

duty, and glorying in the delusion that the spoilers of Belgium sang "Ein' feste Burg" at their dirty work, while Tommy and Jock sang "Where the wind blows we'll go" and "Tipperary." I know some songs Fritz sang across the parapet, and they were neither pious nor bonny. Teutonic culture seems first to demand the sterilisation of the sense of humour.

THE PROFESSOR.

Of course! Laughter and Hate are not to be grown in the same flower-pot.

THE CELT.

Well, I rejoice that our lads meet the sternly official and carefully inculcated Hate of the Hun with honest, ribald laughter. No battle-cry or slogan of olden times seems more magnificent to me than the shout of "Early Doors for the Hippodrome!" with which, in France and in Gallipoli, our men climbed over the parapets; and to dribble a football towards the German lines is a kind of valour that, even more than the Charge of Balacava, assures me of the splendour of the race. I give you a toast, gentlemen—"The lads who laugh, and the lads who chaff, an are, to-day, through Bapaume and Peronne!"

THE MUSER AND THE PROFESSOR (*together*).

Here's to them, with a will!

[*All drink the toast.*]

* * * * *

THE PROFESSOR.

Well, gentlemen, the fire is almost out, and our centenary is come indeed. So we cannot do better than finish the bowl and wend our way homeward.

THE CELT AND THE MUSER.

Good night! Good night! And may we all meet at our bicentenary of happy omen!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

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BESIEGED IN KUT—AND AFTER.

BY C. B.

IX.

THE siege, so far as we were concerned, now entered on a second stage. The exhilaration bred of the novelty of being invested had by now worn off, and was succeeded for a time by the dull ache of disappointment at the failure of our people to relieve us after six weeks, and by a period of enhanced discomfort. Our unbounded faith in their capacity to help us was somewhat shaken, and although we felt quite certain of relief in the near future, yet the knowledge that it was possible for a British Relieving Force to do less than the anxiety of a besieged one had marked out for it to do, served to render our enforced confinement more irritating.

As early as the 10th January rations went down to about two-thirds, though we had not

yet started on the battery bulls or the horses. Fuel had become scarce. All the wooden settees, so dear to the coffee-shop *habitués* of Iraq, had been chopped up and burnt, and all the wooden doors of the quondam shops in the Bazar were being pulled down to share the same fate. The usual wood ration now consisted of bits of liquorice root or furze bush or of old doors and beams. Oil was coming to an end, and candles and *ghi* were beginning to be used for illumination purposes.

On the 13th we were on half rations—bully, rice, butter, jam, dates, and bread,—we might have done worse! and fortunately could not see into the future.

The same day the brick plinths of the Bazar were pulled up and taken away for making defences. Since the

Bazar had to be used as a public road, the increased floor-space this gave us was a distinct gain.

That afternoon was typical of many. After the usual round of hospital duties—office work, correspondence, rations, rounds of visits, dressings, and operations—we had gone over for tea, and the Turk started his evening "hate." As so often happened, a bad case of abdominal wound soon had us back again, and we had to operate in the midst of the "pothor." Several shells dropped round about us as we worked, and one just behind us landed fairly inside one of the little "wards" of the next-door hospital and killed three patients. Amongst the hiss of our "primus" stove, the sizzle of the steaming steriliser, the clatter of the instruments in enamelled trays, and the smell of the chloroform, the dull thuds of shells as they dropped or burst amidst the walls of the houses, and the tremors of the ground we stood on from their frequent concussions, formed a strange accompaniment to our work in the little mud-walled theatre. We were never sorry when these hates finished, and we could feel that, short of a night exacerbation, we might expect peace for at least a few hours. But from a professional point of view the siege gave the surgeon a rare opportunity of getting his patients very soon after they were hit, of treating them before complications set in, and of watching their progress and the effect

of his treatment upon them, instead of having, as is almost always the lot of the military doctor, to send them along to the Base for some one else to look after.

The next few days it rained steadily, and the lanes of Kut became indescribably filthy. The hospital main Bazar street became a stream; many of the wards leaked, and the patients were miserable and cold. The trenches were abominable, and the Tommies were in some cases up to their waists in liquid mud. The 21st beat all records up to date, and it rained unceasingly. Everybody and everything were wet through, and the roads became troughs of mud. It was a pitiable sight to watch the efforts of the mule transport carts struggling through these quagmires on a dark night,—one often wondered how on earth they ever got to their destinations. The river rose to within a few inches of the top of the bank, and our men were washed out of the front-line trenches. But the Turks were in worse case, and had to evacuate their first, second, and third, and so to retire a thousand yards. Our fellows suffered several casualties through having to get up out of their flooded trenches. The poor lads came in wet and perished with cold, mud-bespattered and dishevelled.

Our own operations were carried on under difficulties, and the rain dripped through our skylight and down our necks. One unfortunate sowar, I remember, came in mortally wounded. He had been hit

whilst helping to dig the grave of a comrade who had just been killed. Such is the irony of fate; but what atrocious luck!

The floods set us wondering if the Turks would be washed out of their positions down below, and if the promised assault by the Relieving Force would come off; but though distant guns were heard at dawn, and again at intervals during the day, we were left in ignorance as to the result.

A visit to the housetop gave a splendid view of the swollen river and of the extensive floods. The Hai had become a considerable stream, winding away to meet our people at Nasiriyeh, and the enemy's ships stood out boldly high above the Turkish camp.

The 23rd was a Sunday, and in the evening one went to church. The services were held in an upper room in the "Serai," and in that part of it nearest the river. The room was quite small, but could overflow into the padre's private room next door, and so accommodate some fifty people. At one end a plain table covered by an improvised altar-cloth and a simple ornament or two, the body of the room occupied by a few benches, and by the altar stood our surpliced padre.—A simple church indeed, but far more impressive than many a mighty cathedral. For, mingled with the priest's solemn tones as he read the prayers for peace were the boom of the enemy guns and the crack of his snipers' rifles, and it was easier perhaps

amidst such surroundings to draw near to the God of Battles and the Prince of Peace.

That day we got in a wounded Turk from the trenches. He was a fine-looking, hefty fellow, phlegmatic and stoical like the rest of his kind. They are men of robust physique, broad and burly, and of splendid vitality.

In this particular their allies the Arabs vie with them. They take a lot of killing, and, when wounded, recover rapidly from wounds and answer readily to the surgeon's efforts.

The 23rd saw a further reduction in rations, and bread seemed to be giving out; but we dined friend Hepaton that night, and in his honour broached our last bottle of green gooseberries.

On the 25th the heads of departments met in solemn conclave to consider the state of our supplies; and on the 26th our suspense regarding the doings of the R.F. was ended for some time, for the General issued a lengthy *communiqué* on the subject, and took at the same time the opportunity of explaining to us all his strategy of the past few weeks. He thought, perhaps, that such was due to the gallant Division he had led for so long. "The relieving force under General Aylmer," it ran, "has been unsuccessful in its efforts to dislodge the Turks entrenched on the left bank of the river some fourteen miles below the position at Ess Sinn, where

we defeated them in September last. . . . Our Relieving Force suffered severe loss, and had very bad weather to contend against; they are entrenched close to the Turkish position.

"More reinforcements are on the way up-river, and I confidently expect to be relieved some day during the first half of the month of February.

"I desire all ranks to know why I decided to make a stand at Kut during our retirement from Ctesiphon. It was because, as long as we hold Kut, the Turks cannot get their ships, barges, stores, and munitions past this place, and so cannot move down to attack Amarah, and thus we are holding up the whole of the Turkish advance. It also gives time for our reinforcements to come up-river from Busra, and so restore success to our arms.

"It gives time to our allies the Russians, who are now overrunning Persia, to move towards Baghdad, which a large force is now doing. I had a personal message from General Baratoff, in command of the Russian Expeditionary Force in Persia, telling me of his admiration of what you men of the Sixth Division and troops attached have done in the past few months, and telling me of his own progress on the road from Kermanshah towards Baghdad. By standing at Kut I maintain the territory we have won in the past year at the expense of much blood, commencing with your glorious victory at Shaiba, and thus we maintain the campaign as a glorious one,

instead of letting disaster pursue its course down to Amarah, and perhaps beyond.

"I have ample food for eighty-four days, and that is not counting the 3000 animals which can be eaten. When I defended Chitral some twenty years ago we lived well on 'atta' and horse-flesh; but, as I repeat, I expect confidently to be relieved in the first half of the month of February.

"Our duty stands out clear and simple. It is our duty to our Empire, to our beloved King and country, to stand here and hold up the Turkish advance as we are doing now, and with the help of all, heart and soul to me together, we will make this defence to be remembered in history as a glorious one. All in India and England are watching us now, and are proud of the splendid courage you have shown; and I tell you, let all remember the glorious defence of Plevna, for that is what is in my mind.

"I am absolutely calm and confident as to the result. The Turk, though good behind a trench, is of little value in the attack. They have tried it once, and their losses in one night in their attempt on the Fort were 2000 alone.

"They have already had very heavy losses from General Aylmer's musketry and guns, and I have no doubt they have had enough.

"I have done my duty. You know the result, and whether I was right or not, and your name will go down to history as the heroes of Ctesiphon, for heroes

you proved yourselves in the battle. I, perhaps by right, should not have told you of the above; but I feel I owe it to you all to speak straight and openly and take you into my confidence, for, God knows, I felt our heavy losses and the sufferings of my poor, brave wounded, and shall remember it as long as I live; and I may truly say that no General I know of has been more loyally obeyed and served than I have been in command of the Sixth Division.

"These words are long, I am afraid, but I speak straight from the heart, and you will see that I have thrown all

officialdom overboard. We will succeed—mark my words!—but save your ammunition as if it were gold!"

Thus spake Townshend, and all were pleased with the confidence he placed in them. The talk of "eighty-four days' ample rations" was rather a bombshell—we were already down to half, and the prospect it held out to us was not an inviting one. But Reuters' told us of the Russians' pressure at Erzerum, and the weather improved. Though we had no vegetables, we were not yet hungry, and all were very fit.

X.

With the indefinite postponement of our relief, we settled down with grim determination to last out, and to "wait and see."

February brought us novelty in the form of aeroplanes.

Our friends they threw us papers; our foes they dropped us bombs. But they provided interest and kept us from getting dull. There was always the speculation as to whether an approaching aeroplane was a friend or an enemy. Our people were in the field first and had it all their own way for a fortnight before "Fritz" appeared. The first thing our airmen dropped was a parcel said to contain much-needed rifle "pull-throughs." Afterwards they dropped a few messages, some rupees for the F.T.C.O., and

an occasional bundle of papers. The General and some of the gilded staff received a few letters from time to time, and the S. and T. and one or two others who happened to have friends amongst the flying men also got a batch, but the ordinary man got none. He groused bitterly in consequence as time went on, for it never seemed to strike them down below that we were simply pining for news from our people at home. Daily they came up to see if we were still there, sailed about above us for a bit, and as often went back and left us never a letter. We argued that there must be many letters for us all lying at Amarah, and thought the least they could do would be to bring us a small mail now and then.

But it was not to be, and so most of us went without news for many months. In my own case it was eleven, which is a long time. However, they dropped us mill-stones for grinding our corn, for which we were devoutly thankful, and which were absolutely invaluable. The necessary machinery for setting up a mill was found in or near the Fort. There it was dismantled, and although the difficulties in transporting it from there to the town, across the open, were almost insuperable, the R.E.'s and the flying men overcame them in some wonderful manner, and soon a full-fledged flour-mill was grinding away merrily to the music of its belts and pistons. Corn for its maw was none too plentiful. Albeit a large quantity had recently been unexpectedly discovered, yet more was wanted if we were to hold out. Supplemented by the invaluable aid of Bodd of Lynch's and of old Tom Baxter and Sassoon, thorough house-to-house search was made and more was discovered and bought, but the townspeople were cunning and their hiding-places many. Our own hospital provided a good example. One day some "government agents" came round and deliberately began to make a hole in the end wall of one of our little wards, and lo! beyond it was a considerable chamber full to the brim with large tins of "ghee" or clarified butter. More than three hundred of these four-gallon canisters there were.

They had been cached by the simple process of "walling up" one end of a long and narrow hovel. "Ghee" is dear to the heart of the Indian, and this new stock was a godsend. Near by were also two more dens half filled with dirty barley, which was so very dirty and mixed with so much mud and sand, and of such very poor quality, that at first it was looked upon as unfit for food, but there came a time towards the end when even this was roped in and turned into "bread."

Abdul's first effort at bombing was made on the 13th—a most suitable date—when to our surprise and chagrin an aeroplane of his flew over us three times and dropped a dozen or more bombs. We didn't like it. Cooped up in a small mud town we felt rather like rats in a trap, and very helpless against this new form of frightfulness. Your bomb comes down with a vicious scream and bursts with a nasty flame and an equally unpleasant bang. Sometimes you can watch its flight if the sun catches it and is reflected from its brazen top, and you become expert in deciding whether you are standing in the same vertical plane as is occupied by the aviator.

Alarm gongs, consisting of suspended shell cases, were soon erected on the house-tops in different parts of the town, and look-out men stationed beside them to give us timely warning of the approach of hostile craft. All who could do so were enjoined

to get under cover whenever this occurred. Some crawled into dug-outs and some climbed on to roofs, but the favourite places both for safety and observation were the numerous arched-over passages beneath the first floors of the larger houses. Here would collect excited groups of "townees," chattering and straining their necks to watch the evolutions of the common enemy.

Sick men in the Officers' Hospital, who couldn't walk, had to be carried below from the first floor to a safer retreat till the danger passed. It was a nuisance, this bombing, and we all heartily cursed it.

Those early days of February were bitterly cold. Once or twice at night the thermometer registered eight degrees or more of frost. Our little mud roof was white with hoar-frost as morning after morning I ran upstairs for fresh air and to note the crop of bullets and shrapnel that had landed thereon during the preceding twenty-four hours.

But they were bright days, and one longed to get outside for exercise in the clear bracing air. Thanks to the floods and the consequent retirement of the Turks to 1000 yards or more from our own line on the north side, it became possible for a few days to walk out in the open and stretch our legs. But stray bullets were always flying about, and the practice of walking above ground had very soon to be stopped officially. Thus one day we took a walk out to the Pioneers' camp, near the middle line,

Partly we wound our way along a communication trench, partly we walked "overland" to avoid the mud. It was good to be out of a trench, to feel one had a right of way on the surface; good to let the eye roam away over the flat to the distant Pusht-i-Kuh. Snow-clad, pure and white, calm and majestic in the still, clean air, the Persian hills reminded one of the Safaid Koh, north of the Khyber, or of the mighty peaks of Kashmir, or of the long white walls of the Himalayas as you see them from the Indian hills. We wondered what was going on behind that barrier. Was the unrest in Persia increasing? Had the Germanised Mussulman got a firm footing there, or was he a fugitive? The object of our walk was to attend an auction of deceased officers' effects. These auctions, arranged by brother officers, and of which we had many as the siege wore on, were always, to my mind, very sad affairs, though necessary. Prices were always high, but in the later days the simplest articles or stores fetched fabulous prices. This particular auction was held above-ground behind a clump of trees. There was a goodly crowd of fellows there, many of whom we hadn't seen since the siege began.

About the 1st of the month the heavy battery bullocks began to be sacrificed, and British troops got half a pound of fresh beef every other day, alternating with a pound of horse-flesh. This arrangement lasted for a little over a fortnight, after which horse-flesh

alone was available. Very few of the Indians, unfortunately, would eat either of these kinds of flesh at first, and so handicapped themselves very considerably. There were no fresh vegetables, no sugar and no bacon—a little butter, a little jam—our bread was half-wheaten, half atta or barley, oil was about finished, and wood was scarce. Roofs, doors, and verandahs were being pulled down to supplement the stock. There was a certain amount of ships' coal, mostly dust, and this we mixed with mud and crude oil and made into coal balls, which burnt indifferently well in improvised tin braziers. We had a ration of dried potato-meal for some weeks, and were able to buy a few quarts of dried beans and peas from the natives. Also in one of the streets the Arabs were allowed to sell such produce as they possessed, and for some time they kept up small supplies of coffee, beans, peas, salt, and of "kabaabs." "Kabaabs" are a sort of small, thick, sweet pancake, made of flour, ghee, and sugar. Eaten hot, with jam, they are not so bad, and we took to having them for tea as long as the supply lasted. They gave us the extra "bread stuff" which our diminishing cereal ration made a real want; we were not yet hungry and were all pretty fit, but we missed the sugar badly.

On the 2nd an aeroplane dropped some papers in which we read the Turkish account of Ctesiphon and after, which was of great interest to those

who were there. They were pleased to remark that the British commander "fled" to Busra!

A picture paper of some date in January said it had just heard that Townshend had retired to a position at Kut, a "coaling station on the Tigris"! but no one seemed to know that we were very much besieged and had been for weeks, and we felt hurt.

The same day we lost a colleague. A popular doctor was shot through the head by a chance bullet. Fortunately unconscious, he lingered for some days, but died within a week, much regretted by us all. We laid him to rest amongst the palms, and our hearts went out to the little woman we knew he had left behind him.

On the 4th we had a brisk evening bombardment which did very little damage, and some rather disturbing Reuters. Zeppelin raids at home seemed to be becoming serious, and one wondered where one's people were.

However, we of the sawbones profession were kept too busy to brood over the depressing wires, and our days passed quickly. The usual evening hate took place on the 5th, and a sniper succeeded in hitting one of my patients. The poor wretch was basking in a square yard of sunshine, and picking innumerable lice off his blanket, when a bullet came round some corner and hit him in the leg. He was very depressed over it; said he had no luck in this war. He had lost two brothers in France, and this was the third

time he had himself been hit. He had yet to become a prisoner, and God knows what has become of him now. Could he have foreseen this also, he would have turned his face to the wall and, silently acquiescing in his foreordained fate, would have joined his brethren.

I watched that evening "hate" from the Rajput roof with Gasbard. Coming home, as the sun went down, I came upon a crowd and a commotion at the Serai end of the Bazar. Inquiry elicited the fact that something had collapsed in the first storey of the house they were staring at, and looking up I perceived that the gunners' eyrie above the old coffee-shop had disappeared, and there was dust and confusion.

It seemed likely that there was work for a "medico," so I clambered up the gimcrack stairs and groped my way in. Passing through one room I found myself up against a mound of sandbags in the next. From the midst of this came mutterings and gaspings, laughs and curses, mingled with occasional short sharp orders of some invisible officer, and through the dust and semi-darkness I could make out straining figures pulling and hauling at something underneath. With a heave and a chuckle a something was hauled out, and proved to be a dishevelled and dusty Tommy. The roof had collapsed under the weight of a mass of sandbags which went to form the gunner's directing-post, and had buried several Tommies underneath it—and now their

pals were pulling them out from amidst the wreck of poles, matting, and sandbags.

One by one they were hauled out, and save for bruises and sprains and scratches, they were none the worse, and looked upon it all as a huge joke.

February 6 was distinguished by the reduction of the wood ration to half a pound per man—not much to cook with—and much advice as to how to make use of the crude oil that was about to be issued as fuel.

The 8th was rather a red-letter day, for by some happy chance we secured a small piece of bacon, which made breakfast a possibility for a day or two. Also we were lucky enough to get hold of a few more tins of jam, thanks to the generosity of "Harold" next door, whose Mess by an accident possessed a double supply. These we husbanded with the greatest care. No longer was a tin of jam common property, but each had his own tin, and labelled it in no uncertain way. Jealously he guarded it, and was ever on the watch against unlawful depredations on the part of others.

Dashwood's Mess of four or five unequal appetites was comic in this respect. If one dropped in at feeding-time, one would find their small table covered with a forest of small tins and things. Each had his own jam, his bit of butter, his box of sugar and tin of milk at an early stage in the siege, and rigidly adhered to the plan they had adopted.

Our bread now suffered another change for the worse, and was made in thirds of flour, "atta" and barley meal, and it was diminishing in quantity, but was still good "whole meal" stuff.

The early experiments in the use of the crude ship-oil were amusing enough for those not actually engaged in the trials. The experimenters became "sweeps" in a very short time, so thick was the smoke, and the hospital kitchen soon resembled a stokehold. But with experience came wisdom. Tall tin or zinc chimneys, supplied by the R.E., were soon erected to carry the fumes outside or above the verandah roofs, where they became more or less innocuous. The liquid fuel was burned in inclined tin troughs, which were covered in by thin sheets wherein holes were cut at intervals for cooking-pots to be placed over; the chimney took off from the lower end of the trough. This crude oil saved the situation as far as fuel was concerned, for, despite the utmost efforts of the S. and T., the supply of wood was hopelessly inadequate. One Mess, I remember, found a few old Turkish biscuits. These in a home-made brazier burned merrily enough, and lasted for a few days. Possibly, two months later, they regretted the destruction of so little of even such "food"; but the time was cold, and the brazier a godsend to those who were privileged to huddle around it.

That day, too, the General issued a *communiqué*, in which he gave us the news that a Division was to commence embarking in Egypt for "Messypt" on February 10th. We calculated. How much exactly of all arms comprised a Division? How many guns? How many transports will it take to bring it? How many days should we allow for embarkation and the voyage to Busra—for the transshipment to river craft and for the journey up? It would take them a good month, we said. Ye gods! must we wait another month? Heigh-ho! Anyhow they would, we were sure, make certain of it, if we were not relieved before!

The next two days it poured with rain. Half one of our mess walls came down with a crash, and I slept beneath the roof that night in some expectation of a further collapse.

The roads again became rivers of mud, which nobody enjoyed save the little semi-nude Arab gamins, who, with their one and only garment held high up round the chest, disported their chubby baby limbs with impish glee in the luscious quagmire. Fat as butter, they showed no sign of shortage of food or of fear of the cold. Although we had to feed some hundreds of the inhabitants—many of them gratuitously—few ever showed signs of starvation, even up to the end. This feeding of the people took place at a sort of soup-kitchen across the way, and daily in the early

morning our own particular road was blocked up by a hungry multitude.

The rain meant extra work for the R.E. Night after night did their working parties go tramping by us on their way to the open ground, where they were constructing a new long "bund" to keep Kut dry when the worst floods should come. Night after night they were sniped at, and the early morning almost invariably found an extra case or two in hospital. Hospital life was made miserable by it. Roofs leaked, rafters broke, and walls here and there collapsed, and it was difficult to keep anything clean; but the patients bore it all with most extraordinary patience, and never groused.

A new sport arose about this time—shooting starlings and sparrows for the "pot." Of both these species there seemed to be unlimited numbers. Every evening at sunset they came home to roost in clumps of palms, making the while a terrible clatter. Some one discovered how good "starling pie" was, and it soon became a popular dish so long as atta or potato meal could be obtained. It was at any rate a notable addition to our menu, and a very welcome change from the eternal horse-meat. But one evening a pellet or two happened to hit a famous general, with the result that bird-shooting was limited, by order, to certain restricted areas.

The 11th gave us a "late at night" strafe, but also be-

queathed us a dainty "Kirschner," which Trixie found in an old 'Sketch.' "Petite" and redolent of Home and Beauty, she was framed with loving care, and hung in the best light, whence she presided over our scanty board and chased away depression.

We had a hard and fatiguing day on the 12th, for the shelling was more than usually destructive. It cost us, amongst others, the loss of a valuable medical subordinate and some good gunners. The next day we got our first taste of the enemy's bombs. Three times "Fritz" flew over us, and dropped four or five bombs each time. He didn't do very much damage, but gave us a little extra work.

The bombing coincided with a recrudescence of enemy activity in other ways, so that instead of our "confident expectation" of relief in the first half of February being fulfilled, conditions rather grew worse. The "hates" became more intense, and night bombardments became a regular and annoying feature. We supposed they were trying to wear out our nervous systems. One shell fell in the "bakery," and laid out six members of a most important unit. Sniping increased until you couldn't put a nose beyond a protecting wall. Many casualties occurred in the streets, and a bullet even managed to burst through our one and only mess window, although our little courtyard was surrounded on all sides by quite high walls. It was a cold or

"thandi" bullet, as the Indians say.

There were rumours that the Turks were bringing down H.E., and all those who hadn't done so were enjoined to prepare dug-outs; so we started to dig one in our own place. What H.E. would do to us in that wretched little mud town we didn't like to imagine; common shell and shrapnel and bombs were steadily wrecking it; holes and ruins were all over the place; but H.E.! we should be blown to bits!

The health of the garrison was very good so far, but now scurvy began to show itself, and, as we had no vegetables, was bound to increase amongst the Indians, who wouldn't eat the fresh meat. Of dates we still had a few, and of dhāl and rice a little, but not enough to keep the disease at bay. We began a garden, but things take time to grow, and we had to look on, as the cases grew more numerous, and to deplore our impotence.

For a day or two we were very busy making Red Cross flags for the guidance of "Fritz." The flat roofs of the East form excellent sites for pegging them down on, and each hospital laid down several in the hope of diverting bombs from the sick and wounded.

About the 17th good news from the outside world reached us, headed by a gracious message from the King-Emperor, telling us of the efforts being made to relieve us, and of his

concern in our welfare. It showed we were after all not forgotten, and bucked us all up. Aylmer let us know that he was not quite ready, but meant to do the job well when he did move.

We heard, too, that he was getting up an extra brigade of artillery. Reuters told us of the fall of Erzerum at the hands of the Russian Bear. We could imagine the gallant Cossacks swarming in on the east as the discomfited Turks streamed out along the roads leading west and south to Erzincan and Mush. Those Turks had a bad time in Erzerum. We learnt a little about it later on in Baghdad.

But as a set-off against all this good fortune, the Turks gave us hell that night, and we had a man killed in hospital. Our new dug-out was several times in urgent demand. What a damp hole it was!—it radiated dampness. Beetles and slugs and scorpions made it their playground. I often preferred to risk the shells, and Trixie loathed it. One of that night's shells tried hard to deprive us of our medical chief by sailing through his room. Wood and mud and broken glass came tumbling down, but he had retired below, and fortunately missed it all.

The bombing continued, generally in the afternoons. Our own aeroplanes came up in the mornings and often dropped something or other—anything but a "mail." Occasionally they dropped things into the river, much to our chagrin.

Whenever "Fritz" came to bomb us, their snipers always got busy. They had discovered that people were inclined to frequent the roofs, out of curiosity or for safety, for, short of a direct hit you were safest there, and they sent a hurricane of lead skimming over the housetops in the hope of hitting a head. One day they managed in this way to wound one of our Generals.

Our gunners did their best to hit the flying man. Much ingenuity was expended on improvised gun-mountings. One machine-gun near to us was mounted on the rim of a weighted barrel, which served its purpose admirably, but they never appeared to trouble the aeroplane, nor were the enemy gunners any more successful in their efforts to damage ours.

Our own flying men in Kut watched the evolutions of both friend and foe in impotent impatience, for they had no chance of using their own two pets that rested cold and disconsolate under a tarpaulin without the town.

They spent their time and their mechanical genius in helping the R.E., and in producing inventions to help us along. One of them served us to good purpose by erecting acetylene lights for our operating theatres, which were invaluable.

Late at night on the 21st we were suddenly brought up to concert pitch of expectation once more by getting secret orders for the morrow. We slept in our boots. By five

o'clock next morning we were out, and getting all our convalescents together, and armed for "town duty" if necessary. All night the booming of the guns of the R.F. came floating up the river, and as day broke they were still hammering away. Expectant we stood to and waited. Our men eased, we stood about in groups in the cold still dawn, conversing in low voices, listening to the distant guns, hoping hard. Hour by hour went by and found us still waiting and tense with excitement.

Was it relief? Would a few hours, or a day or two, see the end of it, and a chance of fresh air and a rest and—our letters? At nine the guns ceased their "grondement"—all was still. At eleven o'clock an aeroplane sailed over us, and flew away again. At three another appeared, and dropped a message. At five the word was passed along to "fall out," and the tension relaxed. At seven the camp fires of the enemy could be seen near Sinn, apparently undisturbed. At eight a furious rifle fire broke out, and lasted for an hour, and we loosed off a few rounds of the 47's.

Night came, and with it a *communiqué* to let us know that Aylmer's operations were successful—and left it at that. So ended a nerve-straining day, finishing up with glorious uncertainty. The General gave it as his opinion that we should be relieved in a few days, and with that we had to be content, and turned in dog-tired.

XI.

All this left us restless and expectant. It was difficult to settle down again to the daily round, and my evening visits to Gasbard and his gramophone became more frequent. It was good to listen to the stirring strains of the "Marseillaise" or to the old songs of the Homeland. They made one forget the hates, and took me over the seas to 'he wee "but-an'-ben" and the wee wife waitin' there—waiting, waiting. How much longer were we to keep her in suspense? No wonder we asked for more needles!

One day I walked out with Trixie to the Fort for the first time since the siege began. By the zigzag and tortuous communication trench, with its frequent traverses, it must have been a matter of two and a half miles before we reached it. We smelt it long before we saw it, and the malodour got stronger as we approached. We knew what it was. . . . We picked up the Machine Gun Officer on the way, and got him to show us round. Except for the open space in the middle, the place was a maze of trenches and dug-outs, sandbags, and loopholes, beams and corrugated iron. Its walls were battered and torn, its bastion a wreck. The M.G.O. explained the fight of Christmas Eve, and pointed out the evidences of the desperate struggle. The bastion was a veritable ruin. The walls and shelters behind them

were no longer separable into their component parts, but were a jumbled-up mass. Barbed wire was straggling about, sheets of corrugated iron here and there were twisted and torn and riddled with holes like a sieve, and the present line of defence spoke eloquently of the haste in which it had been strengthened. Looking through periscopes and taking hasty peeps through loopholes, we could picture to ourselves the furious assault of two months ago. We could see that which we had smelt before. They were hanging in all sorts of grotesque attitudes on the barbed wire—grim and horrible scarecrows—or lying as they fell on the scarp or in the ditch amongst the new green shoots of the grass of early spring. A few yards away were the Turkish trenches, now often empty. Between theirs and ours the dead men's land looked pathetic and desolate, for none might walk therein.

The middle of the Fort was open and deserted; it always attracted, fortunately, a goodly number of the shells during a bombardment. But the Fort had not been worried much of late. The garrison lay out in the sun, and looked fit and well, contrasting most favourably with our etiolated selves from the dens of Kut.

The long walk in the fresh air made us feel life was worth living, and, getting back, we found the R.F. planes had

dropped more papers. These, however, contained the casualty lists of Sheikh Sa'ad, and so one had to bid farewell to yet some more of the "Old Brigade" whose names we read there.

Day after day went by, but we heard no more of the R.F. Optimism still reigned supreme, but the prolonged uncertainty was very trying. The river was higher than ever, and the R.E. went on making things to cross it with. Our diminutive courtyard was becoming a little club, into which most of our medical chums and others would crawl as the sun went down. Alas! there was no bar, and the vermouth had nearly run dry. That meeting for a preprandial hour became a sort of institution. There was O'Grady with his monocle, who had kissed the Blarney Stone, accompanied always by pessimistic Horace, who carried the lamp; Swingfeld-Myth, our mechanical genius, and his stable companion the Observer; Mac with his yarns, and Harold with his conscience; Canning, the photographer, and Martel, the big man with the appetite.

All would stroll in to exchange the latest rumour or freshest anecdote, and kept us from getting dull.

Dashwood would "blow in" energetically, invariably followed by his satellite the Appendicoot. Dashwood had always discovered some terrifying piece of news about H.E. or new Turkish army corps, and "I'm just on my

way," he'd say, "to tell little Penguin. I love to pull his leg." And having unburdened himself thus far, he would rush off, trailing Appendicoot behind him. Hepaton would look in on his way to the Officers' Hospital hard by, and smoke a pipe of what passed for tobacco. The "bacey" problem was becoming acute. It was still possible to buy small quantities of half-baked green tobacco leaves from the natives, and the "wet bob" would spend hours damping it with rum and binding it up into a sailor's "perique." But the bacey soon gave out, and lime leaves, dried and broken up and flavoured with a suspicion of real Navy Cut and a lot of imagination, held the field.

Melliss, the lion-hearted, generally passed by, followed by his two rough terriers. Led by "Betty," these two always dashed in and chivvied the cats. Of cats we had a large collection that lived in and about the mess — black cats and tortoiseshell, tabby and grey Persian in infinite variety. They were fine cats, but it was pathetic to watch them gradually losing their "silk." As time wore on they became a nuisance. Hunger made them bold, and it was all the cook could do to preserve our own scanty rations from their depredations. They sat round and watched him as he prepared our dinner, and made a dash for dainty morsels whenever he turned his head, but there was always a terrible scuttering on Betty's volcanic approach.

Those evening meetings will linger long in my memory—often they took place during a hate, and on those occasions we huddled the chairs together and sought slight protection under the lee of our cookhouse wall. We talked of the menu, of the chance of leave when it was all over, and of what we would do if we got it, and always of the Relief—the Relief!

We also did our crawls and paid our visits, generally including a few minutes with one or all of the invalids, Lancelot, Lambert, and others—and now Gasbard had joined the band of erocks, but fortunately only temporarily.

Lancelot was so much better that he began to fear he'd be too well to be invalided when the relief did come; but he needn't have worried.

The end of the month found us still in suspense. One evening there were several bursts of cheering in the Turkish lines—why, we never knew, and we thought nothing of it. The most likely explanation seemed to be that they had had a "pay day."

Somebody got up some sweepstakes—three of them—on the date of relief, and we all took tickets—dates up to the 30th of April. The favourite date was about March 10 or 12, and the "draw" took place on the 1st March.

March came in in the traditional manner, like a lion. Its roar was due to a heavy evening strafe from guns and planes, and caused a good many casualties. One bomb dropped

into an Arab house where eight people were sitting. It killed or maimed most of these, and as those who were left and their neighbours were trying to succour them, another bomb dropped in the same spot and reaped another harvest. We had several bad cases in, and were operating throughout the turmoil, but escaped particular molestation by the obuses.

Rations continued to diminish. Dates $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz., jam 1 oz., no sugar, milk, eggs, butter, or vegetables. Eggs and milk had for long been set aside for the hospitals, and the supply for them was woefully insufficient. Of horse meat, or camel or mule, we had $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb., and of bread 12 oz.; a little tea and as much coffee.

Scurvy was rapidly increasing amongst the Indians, saving the Gurkhas, and there was a good deal of pneumonia and consumption. Through these and the casualties there were many deaths daily—a dozen or more, and they mounted up. The worst of the scurvy was that it upset the healing of wounds, and we most anxiously watched the growth of the radishes in Cotton's garden wherewith we might fight it. Very few of the Indians were eating the fresh meat that would have helped them, in spite of a comprehensive routine order issued near the end of February, which explained to them that the holy books of the Hindu religion do not forbid the eating of horse-flesh, and that their spiritual heads had wired to say so.

For a day or two following

this breezy advent of March there was comparative peace. We got no news from below, but we could hear their guns from time to time. We lost another good officer at the hands of the snipers: poor Bayley of the Dorsets, who had come through the whole campaign without a scratch, now met his sudden death as he was walking along a C.T. These "accidental" losses are so sad. There's no glory, no excitement; just sheer bad luck! The same day, I remember, occurred another instance of persistent ill-luck that seems to dog some unfortunates. A bright lad in the Binkshires, who had already been wounded on three separate occasions, was sitting on the bottom step of the entrance to a dug-out, chatting to his pals, when a stray bullet found its way down and shot him through the chest. He was "fed up." "It's no bloomin' use," he grumbled, "they're set on 'aving me, and they've got me all right this time"—and they had.

The weather was still very cold and we had some more rain. The pioneers and the sanitary squads did their best with the awful roads. One day they would scrape the mud off one side of the street and pile it up on the other. Another day they would dig a deep drain a foot wide and two deep on one side of the lane, use the drier subsoil for the road, and then fill up the ditch with liquid mud. This was all very well so long as you didn't happen to step in it. If you did, you went in

over your knees at once. Often at night in the pitchy darkness a transport cart would get one wheel in, and it would take the struggling mules a good half-hour to get it out again.

A lot of horses over and above those required for food had to be slaughtered about this time to save the barley they would otherwise consume. And so the population of the horse lines got sparser and sparser, and the shadow of their doom seemed to hang over the poor beasts that were left. What a shame it seemed to have to "put them away."

But now we got wind of another impending attempt of the R.F. to relieve us. Fresh schemes for the part the garrison should play as soon as Aylmer got going were constantly being prepared, and by the 6th we were again on tenterhooks of anticipation and suspense.

We were persuaded now that a few more days would set us free. The roof of G.H.Q. became a frequent resort of mine. From it one got the most tantalising sight of huge flocks of sheep grazing contentedly behind the enemy army they were so unspectacularly rationing. They made one's mouth water, and caused one to realise how caged in we were.

Once more, on the 7th, we got our secret orders for the morrow—more breathless expectancy—and to be up at 4.30. So we arose in the chilly darkness and turned out and armed our convalescents.

The guns of the R.F. began before dawn and we hoped for great things.

Having posted my convalescents and orderlies, I walked away briskly to Dashwood's ambulance to get warm. I found them all booted and spurred and gulping down a "chota hazri." Dashwood and Appendicoot, it appeared, were off to take station just outside the town with the mobile portion of their ambulance, whilst Martel looked after the immovable patients. They were in high spirits at the thought of getting a move on at last, and our blood raced through our veins with the anticipation of exciting events. From the roof we could see nothing, but a violent explosion not far away made us all jump.

The cause of this we discovered later: our engineers had tried to float mines down to the Turks' bridge on the Hai, but they refused to turn in at the mouth, and one of them blew up just off the entrance. At half-past six, as there seemed to be nothing doing, I turned in again to get an hour's sleep. I was becoming a little sceptical about these alarms and excursions, and thought an extra hour would be a useful asset. The long hours of waiting dragged by slowly, and nothing happened until tea-time, when a continuous gun fire started, which we could see as well as hear. For an hour we watched the distant bursts beyond Ess Sinn, but then the Osmanli gave us a very con-

siderable "hate," the results of which kept us busy until nine o'clock. Next day at dawn the guns began again and seemed much nearer. We "bucked up" and went about with a spring in our walk, but their grumbling ceased at midday, and soon afterwards another disappointment was crystallised in the form of a message: "Aylmer has not succeeded in his great effort!" This was a great shock, and we were not a little depressed.

Hard on the heels of the message followed the visit of a Turkish officer under the white flag. We heard that he had brought a message to our Chief, politely demanding surrender, and intimating that we had done all that could be expected.

He was courteous to our interpreters and offered them cigarettes, and the out of his riding-breeches was beyond reproach.

But the General, of course, as politely refused, and cut down our rations instead.

Bread was reduced by yet another two ounces, a lot more horses were shot, and Townshend squared his jaw and hung on.

On the 10th March he issued the following *communiqué*:—

"As on a former occasion, I take the troops of all ranks into my confidence again.

"We have now stood a three-months' siege in a manner which has called upon you the praise of our beloved King and our fellow-country-

men in England, Scotland, Ireland, and India, and all this after your brilliant battles of Kut-el-Amara and Ctesiphon and your retirement to Kut, all of which feats of arms are now famous. Since 5th December 1915 you have spent three months of cruel uncertainty, and to all men and all people uncertainty is intolerable. As I say, on the top of all this comes the second failure to relieve us. And I ask you also to give a little sympathy to me who have commanded you in these battles referred to, and who, having come to you as a stranger, now love my command with a depth of feeling I have never known in my life before. When I mention myself, I would also mention the names of the Generals under me, whose names are distinguished in the Army as leaders of men.

"I am speaking to you as I did before, straight from the heart, and, as I say, I ask your sympathy for my feelings, having promised you relief on certain dates on the promise of those ordered to relieve us.

Not their fault, no doubt. Do not think that I blame them; they are giving their lives freely, and deserve our gratitude and admiration. But I want you to help me again, as before. I have asked General Aylmer for the next attempt to bring such numbers as will break down all resistance and leave no doubt as to the issue. In order then to hold out, I am killing a large number of horses so as to reduce the quantity of grain eaten every day, and I have had to reduce your ration. It is necessary to do this in order to keep our flag flying. I am determined to hold out, and I know you are with me heart and soul."

Next day the Army Commander sent us a message of sympathy in our disappointment, and tried to cheer us up; "rest assured," he wired, "that we shall not abandon the effort, and that for the next attempt the maximum force will be employed."

So we rested assured, but we were bitterly disappointed.

XII.

The reaction from high hope to bitter disappointment left one rather battered. We, who had seen the river a year ago, were fearful of the effects of more floods, and began to entertain a doubt that Aylmer would be ready to do much more before the snow-water came down and swamped everything. Even now there

were rumours that the floods were coming, and, to make matters worse, it rained again heavily. The river had risen to within a few inches of the record, and hundreds of acres of country were inundated. Beyond our front line was a huge lake, which stretched from the river on the west almost right across the peninsula to

the Fort. The Fort, in fact, was for a short time quite cut off. But this lake served the most useful purpose of keeping the Turks at a distance, and so lightening the work of our men. They had, however, to do a lot of digging, and the engineers were incessantly on the alert to keep the water out of the trenches. The men's digging powers, too, were very sensibly decreasing. They found by practical experience that the less potential energy you put into the human machine, the less power you'll get out of it. They "tired" quickly, and had to work in short shifts. The slow starvation was beginning to tell on the body, but the "morale" was not affected.

The possibility of becoming prisoners obtruded itself upon us at times, but very few ever thought it would come to that. There were a few bets made on the subject, and an odd pessimist or two gave odds against the Relief—one of these gentlemen got hauled over the coals for his prophetic insight, and for acting in a manner "calculated to cause despondency and alarm amongst troops" (how does the regulation run?) Knowing this, we could not miss the opportunity of pulling Major X—'s leg over an inoffensive level bet made long weeks ago. When assured that the General was on his track, his apprehension was pathetic, and he lost no time in cancelling his bet and impressing us with the innocence of the transaction.

On the 13th the 100 went

up! a hundred days! Strange how used to things the human becomes! We were used to being besieged, and began to take a pride in the number of days we were piling up. It looked as if we might vie with Ladysmith, and as the days went on we grew keen to beat her total of 120. There were three or four fellows amongst us who had been there. They said they infinitely preferred their first siege to this one. There they had plenty of room to move about in—could even ride about; there were not many guns against them, and there were no aeroplanes, whilst the climate was good. They had no use for Kut besieged.

There was now no getting over the fact that Aylmer had failed badly, and that it must take time to get ready for another shot. We knew, too, they must be having a pretty bad time in the wet down below. We felt listless and mentally bruised. To work for a bit became an effort. Thanks to the scurvy and the vanishing ration, the surgeon's hand had often to be held when in normal circumstances it could have healed with certainty. One of the hardest things the doctor had to bear was the sight sometimes of battered humanity beyond the reach of his art, because he could no longer expect dame Nature to do her part. Large wounds would sometimes begin by showing promise of healing for a few days, but would then stop and progress no further;

would bleed when touched, and by their presence react on the enfeebled body that had no energy to deal with them.

At times one wanted to get away from it all, and dreaded the morning round. One longed for nurses and unlimited invalid foods. Fortunately, and thanks to the prescience of the medical store-keeper, we had at first abundant medical and surgical supplies, and we were only now having to start economising.

But the sun was getting more powerful, and the grass began to grow on the plain outside, between the town and the trenches. As often as possible we walked out to the front line to get away from the stale town, from the noise of the snipers and the shells. It was good to sit on the fire-step out there with one's back to the parapet and bask in the spring sunshine; to feast one's eyes on the fresh green carpet of young grass, and to watch the drop of the bullets as they whizzed overhead and landed a hundred yards behind; still better to see the bursts of the "windy-lizzies" in the town, and know one's self well out of reach of their eternal *éclatement*, and free to act the part of distant spectator.

Behind your back you could hear the gentle lip-lap of tiny wavelets, and a peep through a loophole disclosed the great expanse of flood stretching from a foot or two below the parapet to the group of sand-hills a thousand yards away. . . .

As soon as the herbs of the

field grew long enough, parties were sent out at night to cut them. The Indians revelled in it, and many "grass-cuts" went out on their own account day and night. It was touching to see the many friends of the wounded and sick bring their comrades in hospital presents of green stuff,—grass and weeds of all sorts! All were eagerly roped in, and they sat with pathetic contentment preparing for the pot the nourishment their bodies craved.

Our A.D.M.S., indefatigable as ever, convened a committee of those most likely to know to examine every green thing that grew, so that things that were poisonous might be readily spotted and avoided. But very few had to be picked out, and the vast majority were boiled up and served as a spinach! It was exceedingly nasty, for we all ate it, but it saved the situation. In a very few days the number of scurvy cases began sensibly to decline, and in a few more its defeat was assured. The vegetable garden, so carefully tended by poor Cotton of the Nth Punjabis, began to justify its existence, and considerable supplies of radish and other "tops" found their way to the hospitals and helped on the good work. To ensure the regular watering of the tender young plants, our gardener-in-chief had a well dug behind the wall which protected his garden from the snipers on the other side of the river, and so he was able to produce a decent crop.

On the 17th the airmen

dropped us some saccharine, which was a great boon to those who had a sweet tooth. For a week or two, also, hereabouts, we got an issue of $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of bacon and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of butter. It was just a flash in the pan. The S. and T. had taken stock of their last reserves and given us a treat. But on the 19th our barley-bread was down to half a pound, and the jam gave out.

The Turks gave us no rest from their hates, and on the 18th there occurred a shocking accident. After a bad "shelling" their aeroplanes came over, and a bomb dropped plumb in the middle of the British Hospital in the upper part of the Bazar.

Owing to lack of ward room, the fairway of the Bazar road itself was used as a large ward, and there were two rows of beds down the middle. At the time of the accident there were several men in visiting their chums in hospital, so that there were a good many present in a small area. As ill-luck would have it, the bomb came through the roof and landed on the side wall of the Bazar, with the result that it burst before reaching the ground and sent a shower of wicked metal over the devoted sick beneath. Three or four poor fellows were killed on the spot and thirty others injured; of these a dozen died within the next two days. The place was a shambles.

The wretched victims lay about in all directions amongst the bricks and dust and blood.

A couple of doctors were in the hospital at the time, and within five or ten minutes half the rest of us were on the spot.

It was a sad party that staggered home in the small hours of the next morning and sat down to a cold dinner—Trixie and I and the "wet bob." We hated all war, and turned in cursing the Kaiser.

The next night we had another and most unpleasant surprise. Through the haze of a troubled sleep I became conscious of a distant buzzing. It sounded like an engine; but thinking I had dreamt it, I turned over to woo the fickle goddess once more. But No! the buzzing grew louder and I more wakeful. A quarter after midnight! Surely it can't . . . but, by God! it is that infernal Fritz taking a moonlight ride. After yesterday's experience I knew what that meant; so went up on our little roof to see the terror that flew by night. Louder and louder, nearer and nearer, straight for us came that abominable machine.

With field-glasses I sought to catch sight of it, but, despite the bright moonlight, I could not pick it up.

Nearer still, it seemed as though it must hit us, so low did it appear to be flying. The calm night air vibrated with the throbbing menace, and then . . . Swish! we were for it. Unconsciously I crouched against the little mud wall,—a mighty bang, and a flash of yellow flame—

missed me by fifty yards! Sw-i-s-h, bang! another behind us. Thank God it's gone by! Bang! bang! bang! through the sleeping town. Plague take it! what next? . . . Now he was turning, and the throb of the engine grew louder again as he passed by on his return journey. Would he pay us another visit, or leave us to sleep? It was plucky of him, we admitted, to fly by night, but a poor game to bomb a sleeping town. The object, of course, was to wear us out. A little judicious bombing at night would, they doubtless argued, add considerably to the effects of starvation and frequent bombardments on the morale of the garrison, for "*qui dort dine.*" But we consigned him to h—ll, and turned in again.

The 21st was worse than ever. The planes bombed us in the small hours, and the guns began at dawn. They sent along over 1000 shells that day; but casualties were not numerous, and only a few fell in the hospitals. The next night was again bad, and forced us to bed down in our "black hole." In the middle of it all an excited voice

shouted down into the dug-out, "Is a doctor there?" "Why, yes," we say. "What's wrong?" "Morton's hit by a shell." Good Lord! it is but an hour since we walked home together after "taking food" with Dashwood's lot. Trixie hurried out, and we others followed, prepared for more work. The Turks had got their own back at last, and landed a shell straight in Morton's den; for he was a gunner of no mean parts, and had given them many a bad five minutes. Now it was their turn, and they got him in the foot. His room was full of bricks and dust and fumes, but Trixie soon fixed him up and moved him to hospital.

The following days were equally vile. Abdul seemed determined to frighten us into submission, but I think he was finding it a costly method.

As for me, I got a cable from Home: all was well, so the world was looking rosier. There was firing, too, down below, and a report went round that the R.F. had taken Hannah. This was a bit premature, but it kept us on the *qui vive* and showed us they were trying again.

XIII.

The river went on rising during the last days of March, until it reached and passed the record. It came over the banks and washed against the outer walls of the lower Bazar. Looking round the corner of

the barricade of earth-filled oil-tins near the old coffee-shop, which was by this time a hopeless ruin, one gazed on a swirling, muddy torrent. Over on the other side, "Woolpress" village just kept its head above

water. It seemed to be standing up to its neck in a great lake, so that the inhabitants looked quite marooned and liable to be washed away at any moment. But they had a much better time than we, and were scarcely ever shelled. Their only link with us was our little warship, the quondam tug *Shutan*, which on most nights steamed across to them with provisions, discharged patients, and so forth, running the gauntlet of snipers, and returning with sick men.

By day she was moored to the bank below the Rajputs—a perpetual target for the Turkish guns. Now and then they hit her, smashing her bridge or holing her funnel; but she was ever undaunted, and continued to do her job cheerily and efficiently to the bitter end.

As the waters rose, our hopes declined. We pictured to ourselves the state of the country down below, and knew it must seriously, if not fatally, delay matters. A few more inches and the whole country would be inundated; nothing would be seen above the surface save the little group of sand-hills. Surely the legend of the Flood had its origin in this country of the great rivers, and a sand mound was its Ararat!

For many days after the bomb dropped in the hospital we were busily engaged in building partition walls of mud and brick at intervals in the fairway of the Bazar, so as to split it up into very small areas, which would serve to limit the damage should an-

other plane make a mistake and hit us again. Of course it didn't, as a natural consequence, and the sort of maze that was thus constructed increased the cheerlessness of the place.

One day we were startled to hear that "salt" had given out, and we doctors of a physiological turn of mind were very uneasy. It wasn't quite true, most fortunately, but there was nothing left but horribly dirty stuff that had been obtained from the Arabs, and we had to be content with a few grains each. Some, too, of the remaining stock of barley was found to be unfit for food—it had to be very, very bad to be condemned—so the Indian ration was cut down to 10 oz., little enough to keep body and soul together if you have nothing else!

A good deal of amusement was caused about this time by the practice of "swopping" comestibles that came into vogue. The sweet-tooth, for instance, who was the happy possessor of a few ounces of alcohol, would advertise the fact with a view to bargaining with him who was willing to give up his last tin of jam, small packet of maccaroni, or bit of butter. Relative values changed enormously. Nothing could be bought for cash. The only basis was physiological need. The bargaining was often excruciatingly comic, and revealed business instincts in the most unsuspected quarters. I made desperate efforts to "swop" a last bottle of whisky for jam or marmalade, but it

was not to be had, and the "craythur" finally went in exchange for tinned milk, two or three tins of which somebody still hung on to.

We were getting very hungry, and belts had to be taken in; the fat kine developed graceful figures, and the lean ones looked more finely-drawn. News came through the General's letters that people at Home were getting interested in us, but we'd got beyond caring much whether they did or not; our thoughts were all on Gorrington and his fight with the floods.

Just before the end of the month we lost poor Lambert, and also another good man who died very suddenly of intestinal trouble. The former had had three long months of illness, and until a few days before his death we hoped he would pull through, but he did not, and joined the great majority. He'd had no fun out of the siege, though his spirit was ever keen and full of hope for the future. The loss of a good friend at such a time touches one up, and I wanted to speak to none that day.

As the curtain came down on March, the flying men dropped a bag of letters into the river! It was maddening! Each thought that there might have been one for him, and groused accordingly, though probably there were but a few for the Staff only.

The next day, conscious of its designation, brought with it a violent thunderstorm and unlimited rain. The very ele-

ments seemed to have conspired against us, and to wish to destroy all chance of our relief. The place was soaking. But the Turks managed to move about a bit, and there was more firing below. How they got their camels to keep going on the slippery road was more than astonishing, but long strings of them were often seen moving slowly "over the face of the waters," so to speak.

In the morning there was another sad auction, and prices were high. A box of cigarettes fetched 100 rupees, and many other things went for large sums.

In the afternoon the doctors held a Scientific Medical Meeting. They thought it a pity not to make a collective clinical study of the diseases which the peculiar conditions of the siege had brought about. Although it rained, most of us turned up, and our interest in the "exhibits" caused us to forget for a time our surroundings, and did us all a lot of good. We moved from hospital to hospital, and engaged in impromptu discussions on the features of interest that were pointed out by those in charge of the cases.

April 3rd.—"Felt seedy and slack," so the diary relates, but we had an idea that things were moving down below. "Turks seen dragging two big guns down to Ess Sinn." They mean to do their damndest to stop Gorrington! Also a deluge of hail, with lots of stones an inch in

diameter. It was well to get under shelter, for they hurt! To-day the score is 121, so we have beaten Ladysmith. Yesterday the three heroes of that siege met together, and had a dinner to commemorate their relief on that occasion. Their menu, set in a suitable design, ran something like this—

POTAGE AUX OS DE CHEVAL.

SAUTERELLES SAUTÉS.

STARLINGS EN CANAPÉ.

FILET DE MULE.

ENTRECOTE DE CHAMEAU.

ROGNONS DE CHEVAL À LA DIABLE.

PAIN.

On the 4th, starting at day-break, they shelled us a good deal, and two officers were knocked out. They probably did it to induce us to keep quiet whilst the rest of them went off to meet the R.F.

The morrow was a great day. We awoke to the sound of a terrific "grondement" of the guns down below—the most intense we had yet heard—a continuous roar, that sounded as if they meant business this time. It was still dark, and from the roofs we could see hundreds of "flashes" vivid and quivering in the dark grey of the early morning. As day broke one saw heads on all the roofs, eagerly watching the signs of struggle fifteen miles away. "Harold," whilst doing so, was nearly blown off by a "whizz-bang," but fortunately just escaped.

At 8.30 Gorringe sent up to say he had taken five lines of trenches at Hannah! "Good enough," we thought, and all was merry and bright. As evening came on there was more firing, and we rested our arms on the housetop walls and gazed and gazed through our glasses till our eyes ached. The "flashes" seemed no nearer, worse luck! We worried the enemy over against Megasis Fort with our 5-inchers, and waited for the morrow. We talked again of getting some leave, of getting out of this godless country for a bit to India's coral strand, and of having a holiday in some nice safe place!

But as if to try our nerves and tempers to the utmost, no news came along for nearly two days, and we began to dread another disappointment, for the sound of the guns grew no nearer. We walked about restless and irritable, unable to sit still, and feverish with the intolerable suspense.

Kut was quiet, save for desultory sniping, and wore an air of desolation and ruin. The gaunt spectre of famine was making itself felt. I walked, to see Gasbard, by the A short cut through the lower Bazar, where they were pulling down the gabled roof for the sake of its wood, past the Engineers' shops, where nothing was doing, and then I came upon the flour-mill. It was still. The wheels that had so faithfully revolved, the belts that had flapped round them for weeks without a rest, had ceased to move for want

of food. I peeped in, but all was silent and deserted. I almost feared to disturb its sleep. But the mill was dead. The darkening shed was chill and uncanny, like a sepulchre. Like everything else, it had the air of having finished. It had done its job, and now its heart had stopped!

Near by, in the little mud yard, grew two tall palms. They were holy palms. Tin labels fixed to the trunks testified to the fact. They were sacred, and spoke of an eternity. Rearing their feathered heads in silence high above the squalor of the deserted hovels beneath, they seemed to point the way to better things and to pity the sadness and brevity of human life. I pursued my way in a chastened mood, and soon gained the roof to do more gazing.

The afternoon of the second day we heard that Gorringer had taken Abu Roman, and had wired that all was well—"advance continues." But two more days of sickening uncertainty followed, and the General let us know that he thought it best to reduce the Indian ration to 7 oz. of meal until he got good news! The news was not long in coming, but it was not good; for on the 10th Townshend issued another *communiqué*, and our suspense at least was ended. Here it is—

"The result of the attack of the Relief Force on the Turks entrenched in the Sanaaiyat position is that the Relief Force has not yet won

its way through, but is entrenched close up to the Turks; in places, some 200 to 300 yards distant. General Gorringer wired me last night he was consolidating his position as close to the enemy's trenches as he can get, with the intention of attacking again. He had had some difficulty with the floods, which he had remedied. I have no other details.

"However, you will see that I must not run any risk over the date calculated to which our rations would last, namely, 15th April, as you all understand well that digging means delay, though General Gorringer does not say so. I am compelled, therefore, to appeal to you all to make a determined effort to eke out our scanty means, so that I can hold out for certain till our comrades arrive, and I know I shall not appeal to you in vain. I have then to reduce your rations to 5 ounces of meal for all ranks, British and Indian.

"In this way I can hold out till the 21st of April if it become necessary. I do not think it will become necessary, but it is my duty to take all the precautions in my power. I am very sorry I can no longer favour the Indian soldiers in the matter of meal, but there is no possibility of doing so now. It must be remembered that there is plenty of horse-flesh, which they have been authorised by their religious leaders to eat, and I have to recall with sorrow that by not having taken advan-

tage of this wise and just dispensation, they have weakened my power of resistance. . . .

"In my *communiqué* to you on 26th January I told you that our duty stood out plain and simple: it was to stand here and hold up the Turkish advance on the Tigris, working heart and soul together, and I expressed the hope that we would make this defence to be remembered in history as a glorious one, and I asked you in this connection to remember the defence of Plevna, which was longer even than that of Ladysmith. Well, you have nobly carried out your mission; you have nobly answered the trust and appeal I put to you. The whole British Empire, let me tell you, is ringing now with our defence of Kut. You will all be proud to say one day, 'I was one of the garrison at Kut.' And as for Plevna and Ladysmith, we have outlasted them also. Whatever happens now we have all done our duty. As I said in my report of the

defence of this place, which has now been telegraphed to Headquarters, it was not possible in despatches to mention every one, but I could safely say that every individual in this Force had done his duty to his King and country. I was absolutely calm and confident, as I told you on the 26th January, of the ultimate result, and I am confident now. I ask you all, comrades of all ranks, British and Indian, to help me now in this food question, as I ask you above."

The next day we were given another *communiqué*—a short one. "The army commander," it said, "wired to me yesterday evening to say 'there can be no doubt that Goringe can in time force his way through to Kut; in consequence of yesterday's failure, however, it is certainly doubtful if he can reach you by April 15.' . . ." So we tightened our belts again with a grin, and sat down to go on with it, for the idea of giving in to the Turk was unthinkable.

(To be concluded.)

THE END OF THE YEAR.

MESOPOTAMIA—1915.

I. (Nov. 21.)

It is comparatively rarely that Nature, the great artist, exercises her powers in the direction of mere ugliness; but in this case she had nearly achieved it—the landscape was, at best, unbeautiful. As far as the eye could reach, the plain appeared a shadowless stretch of brown wilderness, vast and uninhabited, the abiding place of wind and dust and silence. Between tall, crumbling banks of earth, scarped and fissured like cliffs, a great river twisted and turned on its way through the desert; and, as some reptiles will take colour from their surroundings, so was this sinuous river of the same shade of yellow-brown as the depressing country through which it flowed.

Upon the left bank of the river, and moving in the opposite direction, another brown stream—a stream of khaki-clad men, of guns and carts and horses—was stumbling and creaking and jolting through the deep dust; overhead the blazing blue of the sky afforded a fierce contrast to the drab monotony of earth.

To the casual observer it would not have occurred that the Column was marching on any particular road—nor, probably, would the Column itself have realised it unless it had been previously told that this track beside the river,

hardly distinguishable from the surrounding desert, was the “great” Baghdad Road.

However, it had been told this. And each man plodding through the dust that afternoon felt a certain sense of relief that here at last he was on a road that led to somewhere definite, marching on a road that had a name well known in the world that he had left so many months—it seemed years—ago.

Most of those present had spent those months in nameless marshes; had trekked by day and night over wide and featureless deserts; had taken part in fights for towns and villages of whose existence the world without was cheerfully ignorant, and of which History had nothing to tell. But now at last it was to be Baghdad—the “City of the Caliphs”—and of that, they knew, the people at home had heard.

By now the goal was only some thirty miles distant, tomorrow it would be nearer, and by the next day they would be there perhaps: a great town with gardens and trees and plenty of shade instead of this eternal desert; houses and at least semi-civilisation; things to be bought in the busy bazaars, new things to see and hear. Last, but not least, there would probably be rest and a com-

fortable Christmas,—for, of course, this would be “the end of the show,”—and perhaps Leave; what a picture!

As is usual in War, there was an “if”—the “if” was a Turkish army, with which there would be a battle to-morrow; but every one knew how such engagements had been met all through the previous year; and so, the “if” put on one side as unworthy of further consideration for the present, the Column wound stolidly on its way beside the river.

Presently the head swung away from the bank, the Column closed up all down its length, and then proceeded to break itself up into small chunks and squares and scatter itself over the desert on the right of the road, where the component atoms of men and horses and mules, each after his own manner, lay down and took a rest.

It was now late afternoon, and the sun was sloping down a less vivid sky, while the brown river and the brown desert began to vary their monotonous colour: the river held here and there splashes of gold and blue, under the cliff-like banks the shadows turned to purple, and in the far distance the edges of the desert lost themselves in a vague mist of opalescent colour.

The day was already cooling down, and puffs of wind moved the sultry air, bearing on their breath showers of fine dust and grit and straw—sweepings of the desert—which they distributed maliciously on the

recumbent figures beside the road.

One of these got up suddenly from a low ditch where he had been trying to enjoy a siesta, and having extracted the straw from his mouth and the dust from his eyes, he stood up and had a look round.

“Hullo,” he said suddenly, “that’s not a cloud over there, is it?”

He pointed away to the west, where against the palely gilded sky a faint violet shadow hung over the desert.

He was soon joined by another searcher after truth, who expressed the opinion that it certainly couldn’t be a cloud, and was probably only mirage, and the matter would have been left at that but for the man with the glasses.

“No,” he said, “it’s not a cloud and it’s not a mirage; it’s the jolly old Arch, of course!”

“What—Sestiphon?”

“As a matter of fact, Ctesiphon would be nearer the mark, I believe; but it doesn’t make any difference—that’s it, right enough.”

“Well, it’ll have to go before we start business to-morrow, *that’s* obvious: why, the Turk must be able to see the best part of twenty miles all round from the top of that Arch—probably enjoying a view of us now.”

The order to fall in interrupted the conversation and broke up the party, whose various members dispersed to shepherd their various flocks, and soon the mass of men and beasts, guns and carts, had

reassembled again, and the Column was once more on its way towards the golden sunset and the City of the Caliphs.

For some hours the march continued uneventfully, the sound of men's voices gradually subsiding till nothing could be heard above the measured creak and rustle and click that is the accompaniment of all marching columns: sometimes from the rear came the rattle of a gun or waggon.

Overhead the sky was a dull lightless blue in which the first stars shone, and in the West hung a red sun just above the horizon; it turned the desert to the colour of faded rose-leaves and changed the ranks of marching men into living golden statues.

Then the sun dropped down below the level rim of the earth, and darkness hurried upon the scene.

Soon the road turned towards the river again, and a halt was called to water and feed man and beast; it was the last chance before "business" started—and once the business was in hand who could foretell the fortunes of the day? So the wise argued, and, having seen to the animals, filled themselves with food and drink, not forgetting to lay in a store against the morrow.

It was well on into the night, with a bright moon shining, when the force moved again: rather uncertainly at first, halting suddenly and starting again with a jerk as if it were feeling its way into the unknown. For the

majority indeed it was the unknown, for the original orders had been changed and the move was unexpected: nothing was known but that it was in the direction of the enemy—a night march with the usual precautions, absolute silence, no smoking, and no lights to be shown. Silently as an army of ghosts they marched on through the night, canopied by the white cloud of moonlit dust that hung low overhead.

Soon after midnight the Column halted again, and the order was passed down for men to lie down where they were; later came the order that horses and mules were to be picketed and that equipment might be removed—so there was evidently to be no further move to-night. Then came last orders for the morrow. Amid the rustling of maps and note-books the plan of attack was finally explained, and the objectives assigned to each body of troops—"The Column will march at 6 A.M. . . . The brigade will attack the redoubt marked X on the map. . . . The brigade on our left will be in position 3000 yards from the Arch by 8 A.M. . . . square A3, E5 . . . yes, . . . you know about the right . . ." and so on till finally all had been explained. "That's all, I think, gentlemen—good-night."

Around lay the vast desolation of the desert, empty and silent as the floor of some immense and lonely tomb, lit by the pallid glare of the moon: only the stars were familiar—

all else in Nature seemed strange and ghostly and unreal.

It was bitterly cold, and gusts of wind blew from the north-west, so that the men huddled together to keep warm, for sleep was the main concern now: out there in the darkness where the wind came from stood the great Arch and the enemy's lines—and beyond lay the City of Promise.

But all these must wait for the dawn: so the Column slept.

Few knew, and still fewer remembered, what historic ground was to be disputed on the morrow. Few thought of the vanished armies of vanished ages: of Persian and Parthian, Greek and Roman, who had fought and died on these few square miles of desert; of Alexander's troops marching up to Arbela; of Roman legions battling against the circling clouds of horsemen; of Omar's Arabs storming

across the river to the rout of all Persia.

And of the Arch? All that remained of the great city palace of Ctesiphon where lived and reigned the Sasanid kings of Persia: the throne of the Khosrau, the King of Kings—the byword of regal magnificence through all the East, where the palace walls were plated with gold and silver and studded with jewels.

"It was a superb palace, ninety cubits in length and seventy cubits wide, built of marble and red cornelian. In the centre was a fountain filled with rose-water and purest musk: and there was an emerald column, and on its summit a hawk of burnished gold: its eyes were topazes and its beak of jasper . . . the whole palace was full of perfumes, and the ceilings glittered with gold and silver. It was the wonder of the period, the miracle of the age."¹

II. (Nov. 22.

A white mist was hanging over the desert when in the cold hour before the dawn the sleeping men were roused, and by the time that the first shade of rose had touched the east the Column had shaken itself straight again, and all was ready. Presently it moved off: the cavalry out on the right looked like a line of moving trees, their lances blackly silhouetted against a sky that

was rapidly changing from pink to red, then to apricot colour, which merged into bright gold.

Before the Column had gone far on its way it began to split up, and the various brigades took their own lines towards their particular objectives, though there was still some distance to go before any sign of the enemy was to be expected.

¹ El-Asma'ee's Romance of Antar.

It was about 7 A.M. when suddenly the heavy guns in rear opened fire, and their reverberating roar crashed over the desert, seeming to tear holes in an almost tangible fabric of silence. As if waiting for the signal, the sun rushed up over the edge of the horizon behind, and the mist began to float away and be lost in blue sky.

As the light improved objects in the landscape could be made out. On the left a brigade was marching straight towards the Arch — now no longer a vague shadow but a huge ruin dominating the desert, reared up like the bleached bones of some prehistoric animal; two more brigades had swung away right-handed, and beyond them the cavalry had disappeared behind a slight rise in the ground.

At intervals the guns thundered and crashed, and far away to the right of the Arch dark spurts of earth and smoke rose into the air; but, so far, that was all.

The brigade, in artillery formation, still headed towards its objective unopposed, and still the enemy gave no sign of his presence: to judge by appearances there was nothing in the way—but that seemed too good to be true.

Accordingly the brigade halted and proceeded to make sure, and at the same time to put a deep nullah nearby into a state of defence; ranges were taken, and the Arch was pronounced 2100 yards distant, and this showed that they were out of their reckoning somewhere, for according to the

map the Turkish first line was 2000 yards in front of the ruins.

At any rate for the present the "master-minds" were evidently waiting for something, and in the meanwhile it was 8 o'clock, the hour for breakfast; so amid a peaceful scene bully-beef sandwiches and water-bottles passed the time.

However, there was not a very long delay before the order came to fall in and the brigade moved off again, this time split up into still smaller columns, dotted over the desert at varying distances from each other.

Directly in front Ctesiphon reared its great vault towards the blue sky, and to the left of the ruin ran a long bank of earth—probably the remains of some ancient high-level canal. On one end of this bank was something which shone brightly in the rays of the morning sun: it was the tin roof of a blockhouse and the first visible sign of the enemy.

But further signs were soon forthcoming. For the last half mile the brigade had left the brown desert behind, and now the soil underfoot was blackened and scorched and strewn with the ashes of the burnt camel-thorn bushes; it was soon after they had started to cross this burnt area that "the business" began.

Away on the left the sudden sharp chatter of a machine-gun, twice repeated, broke the tense silence, and bullets whined and whizzed through the air: they were closely followed by shells. Just ahead there was some broken ground

—a series of intersecting irrigation channels and small mounds; and among these, as if by magic, the moving columns disappeared, the brown figures becoming suddenly and mysteriously absorbed into the landscape.

A few minutes later a rattle of musketry broke out: it was 9.45 in the morning, and 1200 yards from Ctesiphon Arch the battle had begun.

Three hours later the remains of this brigade were lying in a shallow ditch half filled with water; they were now no longer opposite the Arch, but a mile away to its right, whither they had moved across the Turkish front—a costly but a necessary manœuvre.

There were bunches of men, British and Indian, mixed together, irrespective of regiments. Some of these were firing over the bank of the ditch at an invisible enemy entrenched 150 yards away; many lay huddled up—the battle for them was over; others held the heads of wounded men above the rapidly rising tide of muddy water, now coloured with shifting streaks and flecks of red.

Twenty yards in rear of the ditch shells from a heavy howitzer were dropping at regular intervals, shaking the ground and sending up black columns of earth and smoke. So it went on.

But by degrees the crack of the rifles became less frequent: ammunition was running short,

and no man had more than a few rounds left, although the dead and wounded, as their numbers increased, contributed to those who could still use their rifles.

A Sikh slammed back the bolt of his rifle and pressed a fresh charger into the magazine; he smiled as he poked his rifle over the bank and with infinite caution raised his head; but before he could fire there was a thud, and he slipped slowly down the bank, turned over with a grotesque sprawl, and disappeared in the muddy water. A British soldier crawled to the spot and tried to lift him; another turned and looked. "E's all right, poor blighter! Copped it in the 'ead, so you may as well let 'im stop; but give us 'is rounds." And the two divided the dead Sikh's remaining cartridges.

But at last the attack got home on the enemy's left, and they were driven from the works which confronted the ditch, and the tide of battle swept quickly forward to the second line.

Bloody and caked with mud, the limp forms were lifted from the ditch, and dead and wounded were laid out on the ground in rear: the latter, soaked to the skin, were shivering and shaking like men with ague. For the time being the Field Ambulance was lost in the fog of war, and doctors, stretcher-bearers, and stretchers were busy in other parts of the field: in the meantime, coats and blankets were requisitioned

from the unwounded Turkish prisoners, and under these our wounded lay—waiting for something, or somebody, to turn up. Afternoon wore to evening, and evening turned to night, before at last the stretcher-bearers arrived: and then began a painful journey through the dark—many miles it seemed—till the stretchers were laid down beside a small, lighted tent, where shirt-sleeved doctors were hard at work.

The tent was pitched beside a Turkish redoubt, and into its deep trenches the serious cases, after their wounds had been dressed, were carefully lowered on their stretchers, and put out of harm's way until their transport could be arranged: in the meanwhile, all that could be done was blankets and hot drinks.

The pink and gold of dawn had faded, and the second day was some hours old: from their stretchers on the floor of the trench the blanketed forms watched the narrow strip of sky grow to a deeper and deeper blue. They watched till they grew tired, and slipped back into the blessed land of unconsciousness—until their next period of staring wakefulness dawned again.

Along the narrow trench, moving carefully between the stretchers, passed the Padre and a doctor, doing what they could for the five derelicts—giving a drink here and there, or replacing helmets that had slipped aside and were giving no shelter from the glare.

"We must get this lot back

to-night," said the M.O.; "the carts ought to be back by 4."

All the morning the sounds of battle had been few and distant, and now the afternoon sun was sloping down the sky again: the trench was bathed in misty, purple shadow.

Gradually as the afternoon advanced, bursts of rifle fire were audible at first far away, but gradually drawing nearer; figures appeared on the parapet of the trench, looking rather anxiously in the direction whence the sounds came. But as they watched, from the opposite direction was heard the rattle and jingle of approaching transport carts and the shouts of the "drabies": at which the men on the parapet looked relieved and hurried off to make arrangements for loading the wounded, who could now be got away.

"Field Ambulance to get back at once, sir, and all men that can walk," said a voice; and then, "What'll you do with these non-starters in the trench, sir?"

"Can't help it—they'll have to be left: you must stay with them——"

"I'll keep you company," said the Padre.

Out in front things were certainly happening. The sound of rifle fire grew nearer, bullets hummed and whined over the trench, and in rear a battery opened fire with a deafening crash and rattle: soon, too, answering shells screamed overhead, and white puffs of shrapnel dotted the

strip of sky—all that was visible from the stretchers. Now came the rear of rapid fire and the clattering of the machine-guns, a shell burst near by, and some bullets rapped against the trench wall: a faint voice roused itself, "I say, what's happening? Are the blighters counter-attacking?"

"Yes, that's about it," answered the doctor; "but it's perfectly all right—safe as a house in here"—and out of the corner of his eye he watched the Padre carefully tying his handkerchief to the end of his cane, for the enemy were very near.

The Padre finished his job—the flag was to be a last resource in case of emergency—climbed out of the trench on to the parapet, at that moment a most "unhealthy" position, and from his post of vantage proceeded to give news of the attack to those who lay below.

He stayed there a long time, and reported frequently, cheerful and reassuring all the time, till at last the enemy's attack was held up. "They're 300 yards away: but it's all right—we're giving them hell!"

"Hell" continued while the evening closed in and night came on: "the mad minute" roared and rattled, died down and rose again to a fury of sound: the star-shells lit up the black sky, and the vivid bursts of shrapnel stabbed the darkness. But the counter-attack had failed; gradually the opposing rifle fire withered and died down, and before dawn the Turks withdrew;—

many were left behind who would not tell the tale.

It was the third day, and once more the sun rose in a glory of gold over the scene of battle, strangely silent now after the turmoil of the previous night. Beside the trench stood a long line of transport carts—iron frames on wheels drawn by two mules or ponies, and to these the five stretchers were carried.

When all was ready the column passed on until it reached another cache of stretcher cases, and so on till nearly all the carts were filled, each with one stretcher and one or two sitting cases. It took a long time, and the delay was maddening, for the light was growing stronger every minute, and there were still a few bullets humming through the air—but at last all was complete, and the journey began.

The surfaces of deserts vary; the surface of this particular desert, or of this part of it, may best be likened to that of ploughed fields baked hard to the consistency of concrete, and intersected every 200 to 300 yards by channels and nullahs. The springless iron carts bumped and jarred over the rough surface, and jolted into and out of the ditches; now and then the ponies broke into a bucketing trot. On their backs on the bottom of the carts lay the worst cases, while all who could possibly manage it were sitting huddled against the stretchers, clinging as best they could to the iron

sides. The carts rattled and bumped and jarred; for the first few hundred yards (and *that* seemed eternity) the men stuck it, but before a mile was covered there arose from that slow procession sounds that are best forgotten.

There were endless delays and frequent stoppages—some-

times it was to pick up wounded men crawling over the desert who had somehow missed the stretcher-bearers; sometimes a man would give out and drop limply from the cart, unable to hold on any longer; at last, when twelve miles had been covered, the river and the Hospital Ship were reached.

III.

Hospital Ship? Well, not exactly: there were no visible alterations in the river-boat since it had brought up stores and "details" four days previously, but now its decks were crowded with prostrate forms, and there were three British doctors and a native assistant surgeon on board, together with their attendant satellites: thus the grimy little paddle-steamer was metamorphosed into a Hospital Ship!

The decks were hard, and there were not enough mattresses to go round; but any change was one for the better after that journey in the bumping carts, and the optimistic prophesied Basra in eight days at most,—that was something to look forward to.

That night the boat moved out into mid-stream, and two barge-loads of wounded were made fast either side, and before the sun was up they were steaming down river.

The day passed uneventfully, and bend after bend of the river slipped behind till in the evening Azyziah was reached; but here the first misfortune occurred, for some blades of

the starboard paddle-wheel were smashed, and a halt had to be called for repairs instead of steaming straight on to Kut. That night the first rain of the year fell in a succession of heavy storms; soon the water was pouring through the thin awnings and on to the wounded below, till those who were bedded in the scuppers were lying in a cold bath, and all were thoroughly drenched; and unfortunately there were no spare blankets.

Late next afternoon—the afternoon of November 26—Kut was reached, and during the night the wounded were transferred to another ship, on which there were plenty of stretchers, so that the worst cases need no longer lie on the deck; also there was a store of dry blankets—very comforting.

Kut was left on the morning of the 27th, but the journey soon came to an end; late in the afternoon two Arabs in a canoe intercepted the boat with a warning that a hostile tribe were lying up round the next bend, and meant business.

They were there right enough—400 or 500 cut-throats

ready to hold up anything that should pass, and a ship full of helpless men was just the game for them: after a year's acquaintance the Arab was well known.

So in the falling dusk the ship was stopped and turned back up river to Kut, which was reached in the middle of the night; it was a dispiriting journey to many who wished never to set eyes on the place again.

The following day was spent by the authorities ashore making arrangements to solve the problem of the severed line of communications, and by those on the ship in staring at a fly-covered awning and wondering when "all this" was coming to an end—if ever.

By the next day, the 29th, a convoy of about eight ships had been collected, all with barges attached and full of wounded; a small escort was placed on each ship, and led by a river-monitor the fleet departed down-stream, sure that the last of Kut had been seen and that the obstructive Arabs were going to get ginger.

But their luck was dead out. Just before reaching the bend where trouble was expected a terrific gale sprang up and blew the monitor ashore close up to the bank; the ships following hove to, and in no time the whole convoy was in the same plight as the monitor, jostling the bank.

During that morning all valises, kit-bags, rolls of spare blankets—anything that would serve as cover—had been piled up on the port side as a precau-

tion in the unlikely event of anything going wrong, and behind these the stretchers were laid; as matters turned out it was a lucky move.

There was not long to wait before the Arabs realised what had happened and started operations; there was a thud against the funnel of the leading ship, and a heavy mushroom of lead dropped on the deck—a martini bullet rang up the curtain.

Behind their flimsy parapet the stretcher cases lay wondering what would happen next, and trying not to think of what they *knew* would happen if the Arabs reached the bank against which the ship was held by the tearing wind; ahead of them the monitor had now started in with her machine-gun and a 6-pounder, but she was too close to the bank to use her 4-inch gun.

The Arabs' fire increased, and the bullets thudded against the ship, and whined overhead: a man of the escort fell shot through the head, and another knelt behind the barricade nursing a broken arm,—how much worse the sights and sounds seemed now than they had a week ago!

By this time a party of the escort had been sent ashore, and formed a firing line some 200 yards from the bank to keep the enemy at a distance; but such a show as this had been quite unexpected, and numbers were limited, and ammunition short.

Midday grew to afternoon, and the wind still raged and pinned the ships to the bank—

one or two wounded limped back from the firing line, one bearing a message for more ammunition to be sent up; but there was none to be found: it was certainly an uncomfortable position.

But just as suddenly as it had sprung up the gale ceased, and the monitor, backing into mid-stream, brought her 4-inch gun to bear, and 4-inch shrapnel was not to the Arabs' taste: their fire gradually died down, a few last bullets spat viciously overhead, then all was still.

On the first ship one man had been killed and seven wounded, and on the next two ships there had also been casualties, and the escort ashore had had several wounded; but it was the lying still and helpless behind their scanty cover while an unseen enemy shot at them for four hours that had counted,—the wondering what would happen next—the strain on already hard-trying nerves.

The question on every one's lips was "Can we get through now?" but evening had fallen, the channel was uncertain, the Arabs might assemble again, and so the decision was "No—return to Kut." Slowly and with difficulty the big convoy was turned and steamed back through the night to Kut, which was reached on the morning of the 30th, and once more the ships lay off this place of ill-omen from which there seemed to be no escape.

On December 2 another start was made, a small force of infantry and mountain guns having been marched downstream in advance to clear the

way: the Arabs were dispersed and the convoy got through at last to continue its journey, each ship now steaming independently. In place of their previous impatience, the wounded now showed a fatalistic indifference; they even forgot to curse at the lazy and bloated flies that swarmed everywhere, and hardly a remark was made when time after time came the grinding bump and jolt that told them the ship was aground again; only they wondered if ever an end would come. During the whole of one night and for the best part of two days the ship lay hard aground, and was only got off by the stream luckily moving the obstructing sandbank: food was running short too; they were out of bread altogether, and had to fall back upon biscuits, and on one occasion even filtered water was not to be had—neat Tigris is not a very healthy drink at the best of times.

On the dirty, crowded decks the doctors worked day and night, never seeming to eat or sleep—they literally slaved and did their work under the most difficult conditions. Short of stores and appliances, so short-handed (there were two British doctors and one native assistant surgeon for the ship and the two barges) that even the worst cases could only be dressed every other day—still, they worked untiringly and smiled undefeatedly and "carried on."

Stores were replenished at Amarah on December 4, and some of the cases needing im-

mediate operation were disembarked, and then the journey was continued with the prospect of a speedy arrival at Basra, as the river in these lower reaches was deeper.

The danger of hidden sandbanks was past, but Fate had yet one more trick to play, and just above Kurnah the engines broke down: this necessitated a long stop for repairs, and when these were effected the ship could only proceed at half-speed for the next seventy miles.

But even the longest journey has an end, and at last, at 4 P.M. on December 7—sixteen days after they had been

wounded—the weary voyagers reached Basra at 10.30 that night, unwashed and stiff and cold and “fed up”; they were carried aboard the hospital ship *Varela* into the comforts of civilisation. From the hard decks of ship and barge they were transferred to swing-cots; from dirty, dusty blankets they changed to white sheets and soft pillows; and last, but not least, gentle-handed nurses washed their travel-stained faces: and thus ended a journey through Mesopotamia—and a voyage to India began. Hospital Ship? Well, not exactly—for some said it was heaven!

EL HAMRAN.

BAGPIPE BALLADS.

VI. "THE BELLS O' BANFF."

As I gaed down the water-side
 I heard a maiden sing,
 All in the lee-lone Sabbath morn,
 And the green glen answering,
 "No longer hosts encountering hosts
 Shall clouds of slain deplore,
 They hang the trumpet in the hall,
 And study war no more."

Dead men of ancient tumults lay
 In dust below her feet;
 Their spirits breathed to her but scents
 Of mint and the meadow-sweet;
 Singing her psalm, her bosom calm
 As the dappled sky above,
 She thought the world was dedicate
 For evermore to love!

O God! my heart was like to break,
 Hearing her guileless strain,
 For pipes screamed through the Highland hills,
 And swords were forth again;
 And little did the lassie ken
 Banff's battle bells were ringing;
 Her lad was in the gear of war
 While she was happy singing!

VII. "BANNOCKS O' BARLEY."

Just gie us a griddle, a guid Cu'ross griddle,
 A nievefu' o' salt and the side o' a burn—
 We'll feed like our fathers that never kent famine;
 Wi' meal and a griddle nae Scottie 'll mourn!
 It's no' the day's provand that makes ye the sodger,
 It's milk o' your mother that fills ye wi' steel,
 And sae we'll be couthy and sae we'll be canty,
 As lang's we hae bannocks o' barley meal.

The Englishman's kyte is a great tribulation;
 He must hae kitchen, and puddin's and wine;
 A pokefu' o' meal frae the Lothians for Donald,
 A faggot o' wood, and a well, and he'll dine!

Gie us the meal and we'll soon find the collops,
 But if they're no' in it ye'll no' hear us squeal;
 Our forefolk before us were dour anes to meddle,
 Wi' naething but bannocks o' barley meal.

For dance or for battle it's best to be meagre,
 Keep down the waist o' ye, lank be your frame;
 Endurance and elegance, youth, dash and daring,
 Depend on the belt ye can put round your wame.
 Praise God we were born where our food was to fight for,
 The land o' the barley's the land o' the leal;
 It gave us but love and a song and a story,
 And bred us on bannocks o' barley meal!

Take to the hills on the wings o' the mornin';
 Bed in the heather and breathe o' the gale;
 Be stark as the Coolins and lean as the larch-tree,
 And 'gainst ye nae powers in Hell will prevail.
 It's only yestreen we were poor as a piper,
 We've lived near the bone and we've flourished on't weel;
 At the warst o't its just back to auld brose and brochan,
 Our lassies 'll bake us the barley meal!
 Bannocks o' barley! bannocks o' barley!
 Bannocks o' barley meal!

VIII. MONALTREE.

The mornings came like sweethearts there and whistled me
 from bed,

Monaltree! Monaltree!

Never a care had I! but up and followed where they led.

Brave little streams were flowing there,

Tansy and thyme were growing there,

Scenting the bland winds blowing there,

That once could blow the breath of life in me if I were dead,

Monaltree! Monaltree!

Gay was the world; was in it then nothing at all to rue!

Monaltree! Monaltree!

A bird was in the breast o' me, my step was light's the dew.

I mind the sea-gulls crying then;

Myself, I could be flying then!

There was no dule nor dying then—

Going to bed and sleep again the only ache I knew,

Monaltree! Monaltree!

By night new I'll be thinking, and my loss must vex me still,

Monaltree! Monaltree!

The gallant days all done with, glory gone from wave and hill!

No more for me the breeze is there,
 Nor He among the trees is there,
 But grey grief of the seas is there;
 No more the sweetheart morns will come and whistle me
 where I will,
 Monaltree! Monaltree!

IX. "BARRA'S WILD GEESE."

It was not any songster of the forest
 That brought to me, yon night, unholy fears,
 Thrush of the thicket nor the questioning owlet,
 Though these knew all my deeds in those wild years;
 It was the strange lag-geese that comes to Barra
 That found me desolate and dry of tears.

I was alone within my winter dwelling,
 My children gone, my peat-fire dead and grey;
 Old and unable—I that once was tempest!
 Shivering to hear the rattle of the spray,
 When high above my chimney came the wild geese,
 And brought my ghosts about me where I lay.

Ah! well I knew they came from gran'ries opened,
 Where old mad joys and folly's crops are stored—
 Grain o' the wild-oat, ready for the grindstone,
 To make the bitter bread of age abhorred.
 My grief! they found me unprepared for pardon,
 With all my youth of tumult undeplord!

I had forgot those ancient joys and sinnings,
 And now was far too old for penitence.
 From out the North, beyond the seven mountains,
 Those grey birds of the winter had brought hence
 My memories, but no remerse, through darkness,
 Over sad cairns and pine-woods still and dense

X. "ROVING LADS."

Uncovenanted godless race,
 Astray and under spells,
 We left for you the promised grace,
 And sought nane for oursel's.

Our souls might be in jeopardy
 As lang's our blood ran hot,
 But surely we're assoiled and free,
 Now that we've paid our shot!

Mickle we missed, be it confessed,
 That brings auld age content;
 Blaw the wind East, or blaw it West,
 'Twas there wi' a sang we went.

Moon in the glen, youth in the blood,
 Sent us stravaigin' far;
 Ower late! ower late in the whisperin' wood,
 So we saw nae mornin' star.

Deep deep we drank in tavern lands,
 For the sake o' companie,
 And some o' us wrecked on Young Man Sands
 Ere ever we got to sea.

We had nae heed for the parish bell,
 But still—when the bugle cried,
 We went for you to Neuve Chapelle,
 We went for you to the yetts o' Hell,
 And there for you we died!

XI. "COME TO US AND WE WILL GIVE YE FLESH!"

(*Pibroch.*)

There's flesh in the glen for ye, raven and eagle,
 Fire's in the thatch and there's death in the corn;
 We fed on hot fury, for you the cold leavings,
 Why starve in Lochaber when plenty's in Lorn?
 Come from your mountains and sup in Glenorchy,
 Where's left but the sound of the wind and the burn;
 There's nothing to scare ye, dark birds of Lochaber,
 The Campbells are gone, and they'll never return!

God's name! they provoked us—the crook-mouthed, the cunning!
 Sitting so pious and snug in their holds,
 Their eyes shut in prayer till the fat-rings rolled o'er them,
 A blame and a boast in each bleat from their folds.
 'Twas not that they spoiled us by sword or by sheepskin,
 Not that they harried or lifted our kine—
 They passed us at market like dirt from the Lowlands,
 Oh children of Diarmaid! Oh litter of swine!

The founmart and fox they will suffer no taming,
 The twist in the pine-tree can never be healed;
 For vermin the gun, then, for crook-wood the hatchet,
 Search ye, my gallant birds, where they're concealed.
 Look in the corn where they're lying like divots,
 We were of old when the sea-wave was fresh;
 Cruachan will crumble, but never Clanranald,
 Birds of Lochaber, oh, Come and get flesh!

NEIL MUNRO.

THE EXPLODED QUACK.

THE late Mr Herbert Spencer, as elderly men will remember, was the author of a system of speculation entitled the "Synthetic Philosophy." He had selected the epithet in preference to others, such as "Cosmic" (and, for aught we know, Cosmetic); nor was his judgment at fault, for "Synthetic" has the true flavour of the patent pill and the chemist's shop. The Synthetic Philosophy occupies many volumes. To these were added after his death two more of "laborious dullness" in the shape of an Autobiography. A gentleman who had "devilled" for him, and is one of his testamentary trustees, has also enriched the world with an official Life. Besides these, many essays, pamphlets, lectures, and articles dealing with his life and work have made their appearance. And now there enters upon the scene Mr Hugh Elliot with a monograph¹ forming one of a series by various hands, sufficiently comprehensive in its scope to embrace that eminent occidental philanthropist, Lord Shaftesbury, and that eminent oriental philanthropist, Abdul Hamid. We would urgently entreat the editor, Mr Basil Williams, to waive chronological punctilio, and to lose no time in admitting the

Kaiser, the philanthropist of "Mittel-Europa," to this chosen band. His Imperial Majesty would form an invaluable connecting link between East and West, and would fitly round off an unique group.

The admirers of Mr Spencer who remain unto this present—for worshippers there now are none—are extremely chary of eulogy in regard to their hero's life. It would be hopeless indeed to make believe that it was heroic. No one with any knowledge of the world expects a philosopher to be perfect, still less to be philosophical. He is entitled to a generous allowance of foibles without forfeiting his character. But when a philosopher is fault-finding and censorious, uncharitable and interfering, singularly impractical but with a profound belief in his turn for everyday affairs, mankind are justified in scrutinising his claims to authority with some strictness. The philosopher has a right, fortified by immemorial prescription, to writhe under the hands of his dentist. He has no right thus to discourse upon his teeth and other organs, as Mr Spencer does—

"One of the traits of a constitution which, though not vigorous, was organically good, appears to have been a well-finished development of the structures which arise out of the

¹ 'Herbert Spencer.' "Makers of the Nineteenth Century." By Hugh Elliot. London: Constable & Co., Ltd. 1917.

dermal system. I was thirty-two before I had any sign of decay of teeth. I never had a tooth taken out or stopped. Of the eyes, which are also dermal structures, the like may be said. [We believe that cases in which the eyes are extracted or stopped are comparatively rare.] They have all through life remained strong. Down even to my present age (eighty-two) I read without spectacles; sometimes putting on a pair, but finding the inconvenience such that, on the whole, I prefer to do without them. . . . The like holds with my ears. [He saw to the stopping of those organs himself.] Those around me say that my hearing is perfect. Is there any significance in this perfection and long endurance of teeth, eyes, and ears, all of them developed from the dermal layer? The implication seems to be that in the process of development there was no failure of nutrition at the periphery."¹

It is hard to determine whether the mincing self-complacency or the grotesque pedantry of the passage is the more conspicuous. In point of fact, as Mr Elliot does not omit to remark, "it would have been very much better for him if he had foregone his dental prejudices, and had his teeth properly attended to."² Health—first his own and then other people's—was never long absent from his thoughts. No old wife ever expatiated upon her symptoms at greater length, or with a keener relish. When he grew tired of feeling his own pulse, he fell to prescribing for other people. Two children were once allowed to stay with him in the country for a fortnight, and this is how he writes to their mother upon the termination of the visit—

"The difference in their state is almost exclusively due to difference of regimen. I stopped the tepid bath in the morning and gave them hot. Chilling the skin, with their state of lungs, is very detrimental. They were, as you have seen, more thickly clothed both indoors and out, and they ought to have flannel next the skin all over. The bare or ill-clothed legs which the present fashion of children's dresses involves is the cause of no end of illnesses, and undermines no end of constitutions. Further, their necks should be clothed. With their delicate mucous membranes and liability to colds the skin around the throat should be protected."³

And he goes on to specify *ad longum* the particulars in which he varied his guests' diet. Compared with this synthetic philosopher, Miss Emma Woodhouse's father was the embodiment of robust commonsense.

Mr Spencer, moreover, had an incurable and insufferable mania for teaching other people their business. From statesman to kitchenmaid, there was no sort or condition of person whom he was not prepared to instruct in the practice of his vocation, and to whom he was not eager to explain "all about it." The mysteries of lighting fires, hanging pictures, and arranging flowers on a dinner table, were among the important branches of industry his theories on which he was in the habit of stuffing down the throats of his acquaintance.⁴ As chairman of a special House Committee at the Athenæum, he harangued

¹ Duncan's 'Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer.' London: 1908. P. 529.

² Elliot, p. 51.

³ Duncan, p. 286.

⁴ See Duncan, p. 510.

his colleagues, in the dialect of his writings, on the subject of toughness, and accused the club butcher to his face of supplying meat that contained an undue proportion of connective tissue.¹ It is not without reason that the attitude of the biographers is uniformly apologetic—never enthusiastic. He, himself, during his lifetime, was constantly engaged in correcting “misrepresentations” of his doctrine. Even so do they busy themselves in brushing away misconceptions as to his walk and conversation, and denying apocryphal anecdotes. He was not, it seems, quite so sensitive, or uncompanionable, or generally odious, as the world has been apt to suppose. Sometimes a gleam of courage lights up a biographer’s eye. He nerves himself for a good hard knock at obscurantism and orthodoxy. Mr Spencer, he asseverates, was no Puritan or ascetic. On the contrary, he inculcated the pursuit of pleasure in so far as not incompatible with the pursuit of health. We are afraid that Mr Spencer’s exhortations to enjoyment always leave us cold; for they remind us of nothing so much as of Mr Pecksniff’s efforts to promote the brisk circulation of the currant wine at his own table, (“It is a poor heart that never rejoices,” quoth he), the while he secretly discusses within himself the best remedies for colic. Field sports and football were re-

prehensible, for they inflict pain on other creatures and “sear the sympathies.” So was chess, “because of the humiliation entailed upon the loser in a game of so purely an intellectual character.”² But billiards “was in conformity with ethical principles” because he happened to like it. The truth is that, while by the age of thirty or thereabouts he had “lost any capacity he may have had for falling in love,”³ his passionate attachment to himself knew no bounds and never flagged. It is significant to observe the biographers clutching at straws, as Mr Duncan appears to do in the following inimitable paragraph:—

“In many respects Spencer was a model club-man. In his relations with his fellow-members he invariably showed delicacy and good feeling. It is not enough to say that he was strictly courteous, but he realised that the true spirit of club etiquette is for a man to behave with the studied decorum of one who is living not in his own house, but rather in the house of a friend. In his manners and bearing he showed plenty of that tactful good nature in which he thought himself deficient. He never offended any one by loud speech, injudicious remarks, or incautious behaviour, and was ever most punctilious in adhering to the small unwritten laws upon which so much of the comfort of club life depends.”⁴

Every sentence yields a gem of the purest water, and throws a flood of light upon the manners and customs of the Athenæum. But what

¹ See Duncan, p. 509.

² Elliot, p. 197. We are not responsible for Mr Elliot’s grammar.

³ *Ib.*, p. 21.

⁴ Duncan, p. 496.

an epitaph! He scrupulously abstained, it seems, from expectorating in the fireplace; he comforted himself with "studied decorum"; he never, we are to suppose, stood on his head, or danced the Highland fling in the smoking-room; he was on his guard against "incautious behaviour"; as who should say, against a ruthless accumulation of all the evening papers, and a refreshing slumber on the top of them! Probably the most flattering account of the sage is that which we owe to two of the three ladies who kept house for him between 1889 and 1897.¹ Yet it requires little perspicacity to see that these must have been trying years, and that Mr Spencer must have been far from easy to live with. To use his own vocabulary, the organism signally failed to adapt itself to its environment. There is nothing in the little book to throw doubt upon Mr Elliot's unvarnished statement that, while in society his behaviour was "much like that of ordinary middle-class people," and "tended to be representative of the Bayswater boarding-houses" where he had lived so long, "his personality was everywhere intruded, and could suffer no limitations and live under no compulsion."² In plain English, he was intolerably arrogant and selfish. "His personality outside his works was meagre and petty."³ David Hume, too, was fond enough of

his comforts, and was inordinately vain. But there was something eminently human, and therefore likeable, in his composition. The fatal flaw in Mr Herbert Spencer's character was his essential inhumanity. It is plain that not one of his friends felt towards him as Adam Smith felt towards his great fellow-countryman and contemporary.

Few men have commenced philosopher more scantily equipped for their undertaking than Mr Spencer. His schooling had been scrappy. He had never looked into Hobbes nor perused Locke. Paley and Bentham were to him little more than names. Of Hume and Berkeley he says nothing. When twenty-four he "met with a translation of Kant [he had no German], and read the first few pages. Forthwith rejecting his doctrine of Time and Space, I read no further."⁴ He could not read Kant, Mr Elliot officiously explains, because in so doing "a subtraction from his own personality was involved."⁵ We prefer the pregnant fact to the explanation, which tells us nothing. "Twice or thrice," writes Mr Spencer to Mr Leslie Stephen in 1899, "I have taken up Plato's 'Dialogues' and have quickly put them down with more or less irritation. And of Aristotle I know even less than of Plato."⁶ He calls to our mind a certain worthy minister of Inverkip, who professed, according to John Lock-

¹ 'Home Life with Herbert Spencer.' By Two. Bristol: Arrowsmith. 1906.

² Elliot, p. 54.

³ Elliot, p. 9.

⁴ Duncan, p. 418.

⁵ Elliot, p. 55.

⁶ Duncan, p. 48.

hart, "never to have bought or borrowed a book since he cam' to years o' discretion." In other respects also he had a spiritual ancestor in the same divine, who

"found an old system of logic in the manse when he was married, and has thought fit to divide his discourses *logice* in consequence. He always sets out with a definition. For instance, he has been lecturing and preaching on the supper at Cana for those nine weeks, and the first thing he did was to define *wine* and *water* for the elucidation of the metamorphosis performed in his text. 'Wine,' quoth he, 'is a pleasant exhilarating liquor, taken after dinner and at other times—by genteel people—in moderation most excellent, but in excess odious. Water is a pure, perspicuous substance, useful in cleansing or purifying of things defiled.'¹

In a word, Mr Spencer's state was ever one of "facetious and rejoicing ignorance."

One result of this, it need scarce be said, is, that he is, or was, held in the highest esteem by the dreary crowd who never give that spavined and broken-winded screw "Education," the rest it so sorely needs. Veneration for antiquity he declared, early in his career, to be "one of the greatest obstacles not only to the advancement of architecture but to the progress of every species of improvement"; and the main source of veneration for antiquity "exists in the present system of classical education."² "Science alone," he opined, "fully develops the intellectual faculties," for it "abhors authority." From the point of

view both of utility and of mental discipline, "the study of science should be the pre-eminent ingredient in a good education."³ He does not indeed appear to have nourished the furious animosity against the ideal of the scholar and the gentleman which throws Mr H. G. Wells into such alarming tantrums—otherwise their views seem to be identical.

Now the curious thing is that, if Mr Spencer was sadly to seek in philosophy he was even worse found in science. His standard of scientific knowledge hardly rose above that of the man in the street.

"Most of the sciences on which he wrote were in their infancy; and it was possible at that time to write upon them with very little previous knowledge. Moreover, the commercial success which ultimately attended his works is doubtless due in part to the fact that he started from ground that was common to most educated people, and could therefore be appreciated by the more intelligent of the general public. Had his philosophy been based upon the technical knowledge already known (*sic*), it might possibly have had a more enduring value, but would certainly have had a less wide popular appeal."⁴

We can understand such considerations being urged in defence of a mere journalist or populariser. A more damning *apologia* we cannot conceive when put forward on behalf of the only begetter of the Synthetic Philosophy and a "Maker of the Nineteenth Century."

Given, then, a bumptious socialist, destitute of every

¹ Lang's 'Life and Letters of J. G. Lockhart,' 1897, p. 68.

² Duncan, p. 34.

³ Elliot, p. 295.

⁴ *Ib.*, p. 24.

qualification requisite for a philosopher and a man of science, how is he to acquire the reputation of being both? How does he do it? What is his *modus operandi*? The answer is beautifully simple — by sheer effrontery. As a member of the tribe of the arachnidæ constructs its web out of its own bowels, so did Mr Spencer construct his system of philosophy out of his own head. He started without the historical sense,¹ but with a plentiful supply of "violent prepossessions."² His mind was "obsessed . . . by a few general principles in accordance with which he conducted his entire life, and fabricated his entire system of thought."³ "It cannot be seriously denied that, in the main, Spencer formed his theories *first*, and established them by induction *afterwards*."⁴ "The whole of Spencer's Philosophy was worked out by the deductive method. It is probable that he would have objected to so sweeping a statement; but nevertheless it is true."⁵ He picked up a hint here and a hint there. "A generalisation was at once formed; and all the rest of the universe was forced into the mould without further ado, whether it really fitted or not."⁶ If it did not, so much the worse for the universe. As an anonymous friend wrote to him early in his career: "You talk of your power of writing a long letter with very little material; but

that is a mere trifle to your facility for building up a formidable theory on precious slight foundations."⁷ But, to be sure, he possessed "astonishing intellectual powers," and, like Abdul Hamid, was a "Maker of the Nineteenth Century."

As for the facts, he accepted those which suited his book, and ignored or discarded the rest. He hired persons to do his reading for him, and to excerpt material which he could fit into his scheme. "For this reason Spencer's Philosophy *does* present a vast agglomeration of facts — the appearance of an encyclopædic knowledge and of genuine induction. But for this reason also it was possible to say of him, 'Scratch Spencer, and you find ignorance.' The residue of facts not affected by his magnets remained to him a sealed and unknown book. . . . He had not the spirit of the observer, who can amass isolated facts and slowly evolve a theory to connect them. There was no room for an isolated fact in his mind; it would drop out at once."⁸ The pretentious apparatus of proof with which he belstered up his doctrine is in truth nothing but "a pile of clippings made to order," as Mr Frederic Harrison once said *in rixâ*.⁹ "It is characteristic of his mind to compel *all* the facts to conform to the one principle which filled his attention at the time."¹⁰ He is the very type

¹ Elliot, p. 101.² P. 89.³ P. 56.⁴ P. 86.⁵ P. 84.⁶ P. 247.⁷ Duncan, p. 35.⁸ Elliot, p. 90.⁹ Duncan, p. 264.¹⁰ Elliot, p. 134.

of what the mediæval school-man is supposed to have been, sitting in his lonely cell, and weaving a philosophy of the universe out of his own vain imaginations. He is the very antithesis of what the modern inquirer is supposed to be, painfully ascertaining his data, and scrupulously testing his results. But to be sure, like Abdul Hamid, he was a "Maker of the Nineteenth Century."

The Spencerian philosophy, then, having neither industry nor erudition to vouch for it, pretends to be nothing if not original. Its author was notoriously sensitive on the point, as Mr Elliot bears witness.¹ But we fear that the claim even to "originality"—so dubious a virtue whether in poets or philosophers—cannot for one moment be sustained. There were two dogmas to which Mr Spencer clung with peculiar tenacity, and which were in fact the sheet-anchors of his system. One was an extravagantly individualistic theory of the State. At the mature age of two-and-twenty he wrote a series of letters in a dissenting newspaper, in support of the thesis that the sole functions of government are the maintenance of order and the administration of justice. It is fair to mention that at a later date he so far adulterated the pure milk of the word as to allow that national defence might be a legitimate object of national concern. But the earlier position is a true index

to his opinions on the subject; and it is quite obvious that he had imbibed them from the extreme sectaries, who, detesting the religious Establishment as much as they envied its endowments, were prepared to go to any lengths to justify their hostile attitude. He had been reared in the purlieus of dissent, which are apt to afford only too favourable a breeding-ground for "conscientious objectors" and similar noxious vermin. His other main tenet, into which the former was gradually dovetailed, was, of course, the doctrine of universal evolution. Now on that head Mr Elliot has no doubts whatever. In two places he affirms his belief that Mr Spencer got it from "a statement which he read in von Baer—to the effect that the embryonic development of animals is always from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous."² Upon this slender foundation he built up his celebrated definition of the law of evolution as importing

"an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from a relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, to a relatively definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."³

No Senegalese witch-doctor or Yankee demonstrator of "Christian Science" ever uttered more resounding gibberish; though, like other spells and incantations, it has doubtless poured the balm of consolation into many a wounded spirit too proud or too "cul-

¹ Elliot, p. 30.² P. 86. Cf. p. 247.³ P. 244.

tured" to accept Christianity. Mr Elliot appears to attach some meaning to the words, but he remarks that, even if the great discovery be true, it has hitherto proved sterile.¹

We do not propose to discuss in detail the several chapters of the Spencerian code. Humpty-dumpty was demolished long ago by Mr Green and Dr Martineau, and the king's horses and men have better work in hand at the present time than his rehabilitation. Besides, we have been forestalled by the candour of Mr Elliot in any criticisms we might be tempted to offer. Twice during the progress of a war has he read Mr Spencer's "furious declamations against warlike and military activities." And now in many parts he finds "the arguments ill-founded; in other parts the conclusions are certainly false; and the style which formerly appeared so lucid now seems to have settled down to a deadly and invariable monotony."² Furthermore, Mr Elliot is audacious enough to question "whether the industrial régime is really accompanied with all the virtues attributed to it by Spencer."³ Mr Spencer's doctrine of evolution in all its numerous ramifications is absolutely dependent upon a belief in the hereditary transmission of acquired characters. That belief, Mr Elliot avers, is supported by "not one single fact that has come to light."⁴ The corollary that all intelligence

is derived from the accumulated experience of the race rather than from the necessarily limited experience of the individual is "a mere piece of imagination—a theory not only unsupported by facts, but in opposition to the direction in which the available facts appear to lead."⁵ Take again Mr Spencer's definition of life as "the definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external co-existences and sequences." This in no way, as Mr Elliot truly observes, explains the dynamic element in life, "nor does it enlighten us as to what life really is."⁶ The doctrine of the Unknowable "is a tissue of meaningless verbiage; the commonest and most discredited type of Metaphysics."⁷ Nay, Mr Spencer's system of Metaphysics

"exhibits to a marked degree all the errors which he so frequently charged against other forms of metaphysics. His entire ignorance of metaphysics, indeed, makes those errors in his case far more conspicuous than in the cases of many of his rivals. It is mere verbiage, carried through by the use of sonorous epithets such as 'absolute,' 'infinite,' 'unknowable,' 'impersonal,' &c.—all of which mean literally nothing. . . . Without wanting to be harsh, we may perhaps observe the Bayswater spirit coming out in this doctrine: there is about it a sort of undisciplined looseness that cannot stand squarely up to hard facts, and evades issues by the copious use of sesquipedalian terminology."⁸

As time advanced a "marked deterioration" became percep-

¹ Elliot, p. 248.

⁶ P. 278.

² P. 8.

⁶ P. 255.

³ P. 165.

⁷ P. 223.

⁴ P. 88.

⁸ P. 225.

tible in Mr Spencer's powers of thought and in his literary style. The latter became "pompous, and, if he had been a lesser man, it might even have been added priggish."¹ "It hardened into an almost deadly monotony, and an outward symbol of the wooden dogmatism into which he gradually sank."² For as he grew older "his theories froze into a solid framework which resisted all modification by newer ideas and by greater knowledge."³ In such wise does Mr Elliot belabour his idol, and we conceive that, if Mr Spencer could read the book, he would receive many of those "disagreeable shocks" which contact with any criticism invariably occasioned. If all great men had been "great" after the Spencerian manner, the Spencerian dogma of the insignificance of great men in the economy of the world might well be true instead of being palpably ridiculous.

"The philosophy of Spencerism," says Mr Elliot, "precludes discipleship by its very nature,"⁴ and at all events it would seem to permit of a liberal infusion of the blasphemous in the character of the disciple. For, odd as it may appear, Mr Elliot loudly boasts himself a true Spencerian, — a Spencerian not of the letter but of the spirit. It is only when you subject the details of his system to such uncompromising and unconventional criticism as Mr Elliot has indulged in that you

can "appreciate his fundamental greatness." Leave the graven image not a leg to stand upon, and then you will understand what a fine figure of a fellow Dagon was. Mr Elliot has certainly fulfilled the condition, though we suggest that he would have been a more faithful Spencerian if he had altogether dispensed with the preliminary ceremony of reading the philosopher's works before commenting on them. No one will grudge him his little hymn of praise, vague and faltering though it be. "We can see that in the whole history of the world there never has been a philosopher so deeply imbued with the spirit of liberty and of reason."⁵ But how if the one be chimerical and the other erroneous? It is no doubt true that "Evolution and Liberty are the guiding stars of Spencer's philosophy."⁶ But how if they guide us down a *cul de sac*? His notions of liberty are wholly inapplicable to a world peopled by human beings, and, as for his theory of evolution, the best that Mr Elliot can find to say for it is that, although he supported it on wrong grounds, the principle itself was right.⁷ It is all very well to proclaim, with Mr Duncan, that his life was "devoted to a single purpose."⁸ But he whose whole existence is consecrated to the cultivation of the sea-shore or the manufacture of cement out of sawdust, cannot be deemed *laudandus, ornandus, tollendus*. The

¹ Elliot, p. 46.² P. 64.³ P. 126.⁴ P. 308.⁵ P. 309.⁶ P. 81.⁷ P. 89.⁸ Duncan, p. 511.

matter is well summed up in the extremely judicious letter sent by Dr Robinson, then Dean of Westminster, in 1904, in reply to a request that a memorial to Mr Spencer should be erected in the Abbey: "When I ask with what important achievement in philosophy or in natural science, or with what permanent contribution to thought, his name is destined to be connected, I meet with no satisfactory reply. His philosophical system has called forth the severest criticism, and his views in various branches of knowledge, physical as well as metaphysical, are severely challenged by experts. . . . I have failed to find evidence that the results which Mr Spencer has achieved are such as are certain to command recognition in the future."¹

By the time these words were penned the tide was well on the ebb which was to leave the synthetic philosophy high and dry upon the beach. Mr Basil Williams speaks of Mr Spencer's tenets as being now "almost neglected." "As far as one can see," he moans, "whether as a philosopher or a man of science, Spencer is not likely to live for future generations."² A melancholy prospect for a "Maker of the Nineteenth Century"! But it was high time for the tide to turn. That Mr Spencer's views had a great vogue, and that he himself enjoyed a fictitious reputation as a "thinker," not solely among those least qualified to judge, is beyond dispute. Latitudinarian ministers

of religion, panting, after the manner of their kind, to keep "abreast of modern thought," and never stopping to think, made haste to translate the sublime precepts of the Gospel into the barbarous jargon of a bogus science, and, with "sappy unctious," enlarged upon the profound and inspiring truth of the survival of those who survive. Nor was that all. "His name produced an almost magical effect in many social circles. He was the fashionable philosopher of the time."³ This means, we suppose, that, like Mr Chops, he "went into society," and paid visits at some of the stately homes of England, where no doubt his dignified manners obtained their due meed of recognition, and where his "studied decorum" of demeanour must infallibly have supplied a fund of innocent amusement. Moreover, many eminent personages, who should have known a great deal better, lent him their countenance. The future historian of English thought may well be pardoned for holding that the chief occupation of men of science in the middle and later Victorian eras was writing letters to 'The Times' newspaper; and in the discharge by them of that function Mr Spencer came in for a good deal of advertisement. He had held out a helping hand to the empirical and "liberal" school of philosophy ere yet its star was in the ascendant, and his services were never forgotten. Most

¹ Duncan, p. 487.² Elliot, pp. v. and vi.³ P. 305.

of those on the other side were, as usual, too indolent or too good-natured to stand in his light, and were content to display their "broad-mindedness" by joining in the chorus of applause. When he completed the 'System of Synthetic Philosophy' in 1896, an address of congratulation was presented to him by a number of friends and admirers.¹ The list of signatories includes several names entitled to sincere respect, though we note with satisfaction that those of Peter Guthrie Tait, William Thomson, and John Cook Wilson² are conspicuous by their absence. We wonder what the survivors think of themselves now. They must be denser than we take them for, if on a cool retrospect they do not share the sentiment of Tom Pinch, who, after the grand *débâcle*, felt, not merely that Pecksniff had ceased to exist, but, that he had never existed. The patter of the cheap Jack has lost the last vestige of its once potent charm, and there is no longer a market for his wares. Some other pill-vendor is doing a roaring trade in the marketplace, and is being already noted down as a "Maker of the Twentieth Century." Yet

Mr Spencer was convinced that he had found the philosopher's stone. His great aim was "the discovery of a single formula which should unite all classes of phenomena in the universe."³ To seek to reduce all classes of phenomena to a single formula is the mark of the incompetent amateur. To profess to have done so is the mark of the essential quack. The quack's reputation is evanescent, and Mr Spencer's has merely followed the course which might have been anticipated. We are told that "the whole of modern thought is founded consciously or unconsciously on Spencer's work."⁴ The only foundation for this sweeping assertion is that he invented certain words and phrases which happened to "catch on," and which have since been worked to the bone by newspaper hacks. In the competition for the notice of posterity Mr Spencer will not catch the judge's eye. He will be among the "also ran." And when the bell announces the "Makers of the Nineteenth Century Stakes," our money shall go on the benevolent ex-despot of Stamboul rather than on his curious stable companion, the fanatical apostle of the Synthetic Philosophy.

¹ Duncan, p. 383.

² Those who had the privilege of being pupils of that remarkable scholar, philosopher, and volunteer, will never forget how he used to pace up and down his room like the proverbial caged lion, while he tore to ribbons the flimsy fabric of the Spencerian ethics and metaphysics, or made game of certain excursionists from Cambridge into the domain of Aristotelian philosophy.

³ Elliot, p. 91.

⁴ P. 76.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ENSIGN.

BY VEDETTE.

CHAPTER V.

AND now the scene changes. The stage is set afresh for another act of the great drama in which our hero plays the leading part or the tiniest of rôles, according as we take his conception or history's of the great events amongst which his life is running its course. For, by analysis, war is found to be made up of millions of little dramas in which the "lead" is played by every single combatant, in which the greatest actors may have but the shadowiest of rôles, in which the most portentous moments of history are but "noises off." It is only the historian, coldly surveying the stage through the lorgnette of posterity, who can disentangle the myriad threads of these subsidiary incidents and weave them into the mighty drama, in which the great actors are seen in their proper rôles, where such pygmies as our Ensign are but blurred figures in a vast stage crowd, a moving background, as it were,—after the Meiningen school of the drama,—against which the events of history are enacted.

The scene shifts, then, from Belgium to France. Gone are the flat plains, the ugly red-brick houses, uglier than ever now that war has stripped them from roof to cellar; gone the dull, straight roads with

their strip of uneven, red-hot *pavé* in the centre; gone that everlasting ragged silhouette of Ypres' ravaged towers, seen from every angle of the salient; gone the stagnant canals, the dirty estaminets. Slow and protesting, with many halts, the train bearing the Battalion southward, through the heat and dust of a blazing summer day, leaves the Belgian scene of war behind. It carries them deep into the fair land of France, among the green hills and undulating valleys, the long white roads, the pretty and prosperous villages, the old-world chateaux with their seigneurial dove-cotes and weather-stained towers peering forth from the summer foliage, the natty *auberges* with their white-curtained windows and little tables before the door. This is all but the "front cloth," however, behind which the stage is being set for the drama in which the Battalion is yet to play its part. This fair picture of France, spread out in the warm afternoon sunshine, is only the foreground. Behind it somewhere, where the guns are growling dully, lies the Unknown, the Land of Adventure for which they are ultimately bound.

Motor-lorries met them at the railhead where their train

journey ended, and whirled them, in a long procession of white dust-clouds, to a large and comfortable village where already other Guards' battalions were lodged. As the men, white as masons with the dust, descended from the lorries, our Ensign looked about him. There was the Billeting Officer, perspiring and protesting (as is the way of the Billeting Officer), the quartermaster-sergeants, his accomplices, beside him. On every door stood the traces of their handiwork. "2 Platoons, No. 1 Coy.," "1 Platoon, No. 4 Coy.," "Pioneers," "2 officers,"—these were some of the inscriptions our Ensign saw scrawled in chalk on the doors of houses and sheds and on the posts of the farmyard gates.

Three platoons of his company, our young man discovered, were billeted in the buildings of a big yard behind an estaminet, a number of large sheds and outhouses, some of red brick, others with merely wattle walls, running round three sides of the yard. Our Ensign ardently desired a wash and also a drink, but he found that all the officers were busy looking after the comfort of their men, seeing that their quarters were reasonably clean, and inquiring from the dispassionate French peasants as to facilities for water. That is the rule of the army,—the men first, the officers afterwards.

So our young man lost no time in following the example of The Beak and Peter, and visited his platoon in their billet. They were very well off, for their lodging was in a large,

dry, clean loft, with a cement floor, above the stables. He and his brother officers between them were successful in begging some straw off the lady of the estaminet, whose sole concern appeared to be for her fowls. . . . *Ah, Monsieur, il y avait des Anglais chez nous qui ont volé mes poules. . . . Oh, la, la, qu'ils ont volé ! . . .*

But our Ensign soothed her fears by clinching on the spot a contract for eggs for the double-company Mess, as long as the Battalion should be there, and by paying down five francs on account. Quite mollified, the lady showed them a horse-pond near by where the men might wash, and the village well, where (after due analysis of the water by the doctor, in accordance with the Brigade order) the men might draw drinking-water.

Leaving the men, stripped to the waist, carrying in their hands little ends of soap and rather dingy towels, swarming about the horse-pond, our Ensign and his brother officers fared forth to locate their own quarters. In the village street they found the Billeting Officer the centre of an indignant group. In the whole of B—, he announced, wiping his damp brow, there were but four beds for officers—the company commanders were to have these,—the rest must forage for themselves. The double-company Mess was quartered in the estaminet behind which the greater part of our Ensign's company was billeted. There might be some tents for officers later. . . .

There was a chorus of obloquy. What slackness on the part of the Billeting Officer! Had one ever heard the like? Why, the place was full of comfortable-looking houses where, for a franc or two, one might get a clean and comfortable bed! One wouldn't mind paying. . . .

The discussion lasted whilst the young lions of the double-company Mess lapped up white wine and soda in the dark and filthy back-room of the estaminet where the mess was situated. Poultry walked between their legs: there were millions of flies: a dishevelled wench stirred a saucepan over a red-hot stove, and ancient, gnarled peasants, murmuring "*Bien le bon jour, m'sieurs!*" entered and sat down with them at the table. Apparently the back-room was a kind of village club. In the front room of the estaminet, judging by the trampling of feet and the frantic cries of "Doo beer, Ma!" the greater part of the Battalion was refreshing itself after the heat of the day.

Peter had a servant, a prodigy among men, and a pearl among servants, which his name was Cardwell. Even our Ensign lowered before the Admirable Cardwell the banner he bore so proudly aloft on behalf of the faithful Johnson. For Cardwell spoke French: Cardwell knew the ways of the peasants: Cardwell had been known to extract a meal and a bed out of the dearest old harriidan who ever bolted her door with the cry—

"*Je ne veux pas des soldats chez moi!*"

So Peter drew our Ensign aside, and whispered—

"Cardwell will find us something: leave it to Cardwell!"

But even Cardwell drew a blank in B——; he returned to the estaminet, where his "master," as the soldier servants say, was sitting hopefully among the flies and the poultry and the peasants, and ruefully announced his failure. The village was overflowing with refugees from the occupied territory (under the French Government relief scheme): the Billeting Officer had spoken true,—there was not a bed in the place.

But then the faithful Johnson came to the rescue. In the courtyard of the estaminet he had laid out soap and water and a towel for our Ensign to have that much-needed wash; and he informed his "master" that tents were to be had, and if our Ensign would furnish the men to draw the tent from the Quartermaster, and indicate a spot where it should be pitched, he would attend to it at once. There was a clean garden behind the estaminet which might do, the man added.

Peter and our Ensign inspected the spot, and decided that it would do: the needful authority was obtained from The Beak, the tent was pitched behind the estaminet, and the two officers had their kits deposited therein, thereby inaugurating a tent partnership which lasted through the summer.

That evening a select party consisting of our Ensign, Peter, Apollo, The Don, and a tall and serious-minded subaltern of their Mess, whom everybody called Roderick, dined in state at a hotel in a neighbouring town, to which they were conveyed through the kindly offices of a motor-ambulance driver. There, among all kinds of big-wigs of the Guards' Division, they ate a thoroughly bad dinner, at an extortionate price, washed down by utterly spurious *Château Lafitte*, and professed themselves hugely delighted with their evening. It was a glorious summer night, and when they got back to their billet Peter and our Ensign pulled their valises out of the tent and slept beneath the stars.

As the result of an argument on the art of foraging on active service, springing from severe strictures on the paucity of the fare at the double-company Mess, Peter and our Ensign were bidden to dinner the next night with a brother officer, who professed, after experience of active service in half a dozen wars, to be able to get an epicurean meal in any village, no matter how short local supplies were—and B—— was very short. The troops going through on their way to the Somme had seen to that!

The veteran acted as his own cook, and the four—for one of the company commanders made up the *parti carré*—dined under an apple-tree, beneath the stars, off three young ducks and two young chickens, with

delicious fresh peas and new potatoes. The guests contributed, as their share of the repast, two bottles of *Roederer* purchased in the neighbouring town.

As a dinner it was a *tour de force*, for heaven alone knows what blandishments those succulent dishes represented: as a meal, it was a frankly gluttonous performance. Our Ensign, who was Picquet Officer that day, felt that he could scarcely walk, so gorged was he with food, when he rose from the table under the apple-tree to go and turn out the guards. But in war you learn to be thankful for what you can get to-day, for the morrow is ever uncertain.

The Battalion arrived at B—— on a Sunday, and at six o'clock on the following Tuesday morning it was on the road again. It rendezvoused with the rest of the Brigade at a given point *en route*, from which the whole Brigade marched to its destination at V——, some seventeen or eighteen miles distant.

The day was a regular "scorcher." Even at the early hour of their departure there was a touch of fiery heat in the sun's rays. There was not a cloud in the sky, and already the heat was shimmering among the corn-stocks in the stubble. The road was deep in dust, and every wayside leaf was powdered white.

The country was terribly hilly, and the men—who were in marching order, their steel helmets strapped on the

back of their packs—were sweating freely even at the end of the first mile of the march. Trench warfare gives the men scant opportunity for exercise, and a long march in the summer heat over hilly roads with a heavy load is a strain on the fittest of troops.

But the men made light of the heat and the dust as they trudged along, marching at ease with their rifles slung, with the drums crashing out in front of them. When soldiers are standing a march well, there is a constant ripple of conversation, of chaff, and little snatches of song running up and down the ranks. The men were frankly delighted with the pretty French countryside, the cows in the fields, the sheep on the uplands, the geese and ducks and cocks and hens in the villages—all these were reminders of their country homes, reminders such as they had seldom seen in the mournful land of death from which they had come. A donkey braying behind a hedge, a drove of pigs on the road, set them all a-laughing. Like children, they commented in a running vein of criticism upon everything they saw.

"Ooh!" said a voice behind our Ensign, "'tis kilt I am wid the heat intoirely. Did ye ever see the like o' thim lads in front? Sure, they're runnin' us off our legs!"

"'Tis the same old game," declaimed disdainfully Sergeant Kinole, plodding along at the head of the platoon; "I know them lads in front of the company! One, two—

left, right—keepin' the step with the Company Commander's horse. I declare to God we'll all be goin' on our hands an' knees be the time we get in!"

This flight of fancy elicited a general laugh. Then the running commentary broke out afresh. A venerable-looking old peasant was digging in a field.

"Bon jour, Daddy!" cried a voice.

"Is ut diggin' spuds ye are?" asked another.

"Arrah, let him be," said a deep voice. "'Tis diggin' his own grave he is, th' ould rascal!"

The "ould rascal" looked up from his digging with a sheepish, toothless grin, and the Battalion tramped by in a cloud of dust and a ripple of jests and laughter.

They joined up with the Brigade and marched on, drums beating gaily in front, baggage-limbers and carts and cookers trailing out to the rear, through the torrid heat. The passing of the Brigade was an event in the little town where our Ensign and his friends had dined. The streets were crowded, every window had its frieze of faces, every shop-door its knot of gossips, to see the column go by. It was the first time for a century that the Guards had been in those parts.

The heat was truly terrific. The sun beat down fiercely out of a brazen sky. The dust was choking: the hills merciless. The chatter and the chaff gradually died away, and when

the whistles sounded for the regulation halt at the end of each hour of marching, the men fell out, dragged off their packs and dropped heavily on the grass.

At last, when the sun was high in the sky, they reached their destination. V—— was a straggling little village built on either side of the slope of the white highroad, smothered in dust, shaken to its very foundations by the incessant rumbling of motor-lorries passing through, with a soporific and neglected-looking chateau, where ducks promenaded solemnly in the courtyard, a wisp of river and a camp of huts.

The men were lodged in the huts, — regular cauldrons of heat they were, too, infested by flies, — pitched on an unprotected slope of sun-baked earth from which every blade of grass had been trodden. Huts had been set apart for the officers, but they would have none of them. Some one, with a taste for epigram, said the place looked like a dismantled poultry show. The officers, one and all, voted for quarters in the open air, as the weather was so beautifully fine.

After various negotiations, in which Apollo, who had the gift of tongues, played a leading rôle, permission was obtained from the local *châtelain*, who was henceforth known and is referred to in this narrative as The Baron, to pitch tents on the grass in a pleasant old apple orchard across the road from the huts. In this

picturesque old-world *Verger* the officers of the Battalion were lodged. Headquarters' tents were ranged at one end of the orchard, the officers' tents pitched all round its edge, and the different company messes installed in the open air.

For ten delightful days the Battalion spent a peaceful routine existence. The order went forth that cap-stars and buttons would be polished, and once more, at the morning inspection, our Ensign found himself, as in bygone days in barracks at home, scrutinising the men of his platoon for any signs that might betray a hasty or indifferent toilet. The Division or the Brigade—anyhow, the authority that governs these things—decided that the village streets were unduly dirty, and the supervision of a daily scavenging party was added to the duties of the Picquet Officer. Rubbish and dirt lying about the camp were collected and burnt, the village streets were picked clear of empty Woodbine cases and sardine tins and matches and bits of newspaper, and swept and garnished, so that when the Brigade marched out of V—— it left a clean village behind.

Three times within a hundred years had the high tide of war swept across the village and the little chateau where The Baron and three generations of his family before him had been born. On a window-pane of his house was still to be seen the name "JULIE," scratched with a diamond on the glass by the

wife of a Cossack officer quartered at the chateau in 1812, while Europe was breathing again after the departure of The Ogre to Elba. In 1870 The Baron, while yet a lad, had seen the Prussians, most insolent of conquerors, lodging at the chateau; forty-four years after, in the heyday of their victorious advance, he had watched their cavalry passing through the village before the Battle of the Marne had sent them to the right-about and shattered all their hopes. Since those black August days of 1914 The Baron had seen all manner of fighting-men in and about his ancient home, *poilus* and *cuirassiers* and *Spahis* and *goumiers*, at first, and then, after a little time, the British,—English and Scots and Welsh and Irish, and Indians and Australians and Canadians and South Africans. From the windows of his chateau he had seen the whole flood of battle flowing down to the Somme—and he was a little shy of soldiers.

For in war, he told our Ensign over a glass of home-brewed oider, poultry goes amissing from the farmyards, and the game vanishes from the woods, and the orchards are bereft of fruit, and young trees unaccountably hacked down. . . . “One does not grudge it, . . . enfin, c’est la guerre!”

But when The Baron found that the new-comers did not loot his chickens or poach his rabbits or break down his trees, his heart warmed to his guests in the orchard. He

sent the officers, as a present, a hamper of his delicious home-brewed oider; he plundered his kitchen-garden to supply them with vegetables at a very moderate price—*les affaires sont les affaires, n’est-ce pas?*—(and vegetables are hard to come by where the locust hosts of the Somme have passed), and he sold them his ducklings. One night he dined with the double-company Mess beneath the apple-trees in the orchard, and made himself as charming as a well-bred Frenchman can. Of the Guards he said: “*On voit bien ce sont des gens qui savent se conduire!*”

It was The Baron who told the double-company Mess of the little river in which they enjoyed many bathes in the hot summer afternoons. It was a few miles distant, an ice-cold, crystal-clear stream with a chalky bottom, that emptied itself into a deep and surging mill-pond at the foot of a ruined mill. Our Ensign and his brother officers used to ride over after tea, and, passing by the mill-pond, where the men of the Coldstream and Grenadiers quartered in the neighbourhood used to disport themselves, would ascend the stream a little and plunge in off the grassy banks. They often had a silent spectator of these bathes—a grey-haired man who sat for hours, a dog beside him, fishing in the stream. One day they spoke to him, and discovered that he was a citizen of Lille, a *réfugié*, waiting in that quiet spot for the day of victory. Patting his dog, he used to say in his

mournful way, "*Lui, aussi, est Lillois: c'est tout ce qu'il me reste de ma famille!*"

Thus the summer days went by very pleasantly. Routine duties filled in their mornings, short route-marches to keep the men fit, parades, company drill, and, of course, daily "orders"; in the afternoons there was bathing or rides out to other Guards' battalions quartered about the place, or a concert by the Irish Guards' band, which had come out in its turn from London to spend a few weeks with the Guards' Division. One afternoon The Lad, whom our Ensign had not seen again since their rather hasty parting under shell fire, came over with one or two others from his battalion and stayed to dinner in the orchard. Our Ensign and some of the others returned this visit, and dined with the other battalion in a camp of huts in a wood, and, after a very merry dinner, wobbled perilously home on bicycles in the dark over an execrable road.

The weather remained magnificent. Every night the majority of the officers slept outside their tents in the orchard, under a velvety sky spangled with a vast array of stars, sometimes with the moon hung like a great lamp among the trees. The awakening in the freshness of dawn was a sheer delight, with the birds chirruping in the apple-trees, the sky benign and blue in the gentle light of the newly-risen sun, the grass which formed their *descente du lit* glittering

with the morning dews. The men also, in their camp, dragged forth their packs at nightfall from the huts and lay down to sleep *à la belle étoile*.

On Sundays there was Brigade Divine Service in an orchard behind the chateau. On one or two occasions the band was in attendance and accompanied the old English hymns with fine effect. It was an unforgettable scene—the lines of tall, well-knit figures in khaki, bare-headed, standing on the grass in the sunshine or in the shade of the fruit trees, the Brigade Chaplain in his white surplice in the centre, close to him the little group of officers, a few patients with bandaged heads or arms from a local casualty clearing-station, a knot of wide-eyed French youngsters, and the deep tones of the men's voices blending with the solemn strains of the band.

No less impressive was the Irish Guards' Mass held on the same spot every Sunday at an earlier hour, the R.C. Chaplain to the Battalion, his leggings protruding unexpectedly below his sacerdotal vestments, celebrating at a portable altar surrounded by the kneeling figures of the big Irishmen—a wonderful and deeply impressive sight. Mass invariably concluded with an Irish hymn—

"O glorious Saint Patrick,
Dear Saint of our Isle!"

which the Irishmen used to sing with immense religious feeling and with a volume of

sound that must have made the chateau windows tremble.

Every day came news of further successes on the Somme: every day our Ensign and his friends discussed the Battalion's chances of an early share in the great push: every day there were fresh rumours of great tasks supposedly awaiting the Guards on the Somme; but nothing ever came of them.

On the last day of their stay, the King, who was visiting the Army in France, came to see the Brigade, and walked into the orchard where the officers of our Ensign's Battalion were quartered and where they were waiting to be presented. The double-company Mess had ransacked the village for flowers to put on the mess-table in honour of the occasion, and had procured some beautiful *La France* roses which, placed in soda-water bottles, lent a nice touch of colour to the table. It was at the mess-table under the trees where they were presented to the King, so they felt that their labours had not been in vain.

The Battalion left V—— with many regrets on a dull steamy day, and marched to a dirty fly-ridden camp in the woods of M——, where it rained mercilessly and life was squalid and drear. There they stayed for two days and a half, a wonderful night bombardment of the Hun lines by the British artillery the only diversion, and then received unexpected orders to leave. Everybody believed that the Battalion was going straight into the fight, and some of the young officers summoned the Battalion barber to their tents and got their hair cut on the strength of the rumour.

But their hour had not yet struck. The village of L—— was their next destination. Here they spent two days, and were then informed that they were going into the trenches again for a short spell. This rumour was at first received with incredulity. Nevertheless it was true.

By the following evening the Battalion was once more in the Front line.

CHAPTER VI.

Inscrutable appear the ways of the Staff to the young lions of our army in France. For a month the Battalion had been fondly nursing the idea of going into action, yet here they were back again in the old routine of trench warfare. True, they were on the battlefield of the Somme, though that singularly diminutive

stream was away to the southward of them; but there was no sign of immediate action in their neighbourhood—the traces were all of the fighting which had been.

A modern battle is run very much on the lines of a railway timetable. The attack is entrusted to certain armies, and the corps of which these armies

are composed send their divisions and brigades "over the top" in due course and duly take them out of the line, whereupon fresh troops take their places. Each corps has its own billeting area, towns and villages and camps, where its troops are billeted on the way to or from battle. As one division or brigade moves out of one billet, the successor moves in by schedule, just as, on the railway, one train follows another on the same set of metals. This disposition of troops in a vast battle, over widely devastated country, is a very important feature of the operations; for nothing must be left to chance, and, with the tide of battle ebbing and flowing, success or failure may depend on the accessibility of the reserves.

But the hot blood of our young officers does not always comprehend these strategical considerations, and our Ensign's Battalion groused mightily at the way the Guards were being "shunted about," while the rest of the British army was busily collecting laurels on the Somme.

The Battalion took over from some very cheery "Kitchener chaps," and the officers of the company which our Ensign's company relieved in the support position—a bowl-shaped chalk quarry with some excellent dug-outs—provided our Ensign and his brother officers with a very good luncheon. As No. 2 Company had been in the front line on the last occasion, it was now their turn to be in support, where their

only duties were fetching rations and water for themselves and the companies in the front line. During their wanderings the double-company Mess had received some fresh members, including one Bryan, who went to our Ensign's company, and one Duke, who went to No. 1,—our Ensign had been friends with both men in barracks at home, and their coming in no wise disturbed but only increased the *cameraderie* of the double-company Mess.

The principal duty of the Guards in these trenches, as far as the front-line companies were concerned, was to "clean up." This part of the line had been the scene of a holding attack in the earlier stages of the Somme battle. The troops concerned had done their work, but had not been able to hold the ground gained, and had fallen back to their front line, which had had a regular pounding from the German artillery. The trenches were badly battered and required a lot of repair, the dead bodies were scattered thickly about, and the atmosphere, especially in the warm showery weather then prevalent, was very bad.

So every night parties sallied forth, some to wire, others to repair the parapet, others again to bury the dead and salve the equipment lying about, both British and German. The burial-parties had the worst time: you wanted strong nerves to stomach the sights about those trenches. Our Ensign used to see the fruits

of these midnight salvage enterprises laid out afterwards in the trench—pay-books and identity discs and rifles and boxes of ammunition and helmets—ready to be sent down to the Brigade. Altogether, during the few days they were in that part of the line, the Battalion buried several hundred bodies and brought in a very large amount of salvage, for which good service they subsequently received the thanks of their Brigadier.

Life was pretty quiet in those trenches. The Hun was having such a desperate struggle to keep his line together where the sledge-hammer blows were being dealt, that in the quieter spots he was only too glad to live and let live. The daily Intelligence Summary showed clearly, on the plain testimony of German army orders, letters found on the dead, and the less reliable statements of prisoners, that not only was the invincibility of the German army exploded amongst the very men who had most sedulously spread the myth, but that the German Higher Commands were seriously concerned at the growing demoralisation of the troops, as shown by such significant symptoms as desertions, slackness in patrolling, and the like.

As a scrupulous chronicler of the adventures of our Ensign, I must not overlook a curious experience that befell him one morning in these trenches. Lured by the promise of a perfect dawn, he ventured forth before break-

fast to visit the officers in the front line, foolishly omitting to take his Burberry with him. As he was walking down to have breakfast with Bart and Bryan in the chalk quarry, he was surprised by a drenching downpour of rain. The approach to the front line was very simple—any one of four communication trenches would take you there—but, in his haste to get home out of the wet, our Ensign took a wrong turn and presently found himself in a part of the front line which seemed unfamiliar to him.

Now, out in France, one trench looks very much like another. It was daylight, and the sentries had stood down, and in that downpour every man who was not on duty would naturally take shelter in the dug-outs. So our Ensign was not surprised to find the trench deserted, thinking that presently he would come to a sentry who would tell him where he was. He noticed rifles leaning against the fire-steps, and boxes of bombs in shelves out in the parados, and here and there a pack or a mess-tin left outside a dug-out. In fact, the trench looked very much as most trenches do in the early morning, after the men have had their breakfast and are snatching a few hours' sleep.

In places the trench was very battered: at one point a huge gap had been blown clean away, so that he found himself in full view of the German lines. Presently, as he hurried along, with his head down be-

fore the driving rain, he began to notice that the trench showed signs of most unusual untidiness. Picks and shovels were lying about all over the place: here a greatcoat had been trodden down into the mud, there a box of small-arms ammunition lay gaping on the ground. Then, even as he realised that the broken fire-bays were void of sentries, and that the trench was deserted, he came to a dead stop. For there, in the bottom of the trench, half a dozen yards from him, a khaki-clad figure lay face downwards in the mud.

An eerie sensation crept over our young man. He felt like the hero of that stirring tale of old Clark Russell's when he boards *The Frozen Pirate* and finds himself in the midst of an arrested life. For, after stepping gingerly over the prone figure in the mud, he came to a dug-out, before which a stretcher stood. On the stretcher lay a man with head swathed in bandages, and he was dead. So was the stretcher-bearer on the ground beside him, amid a litter of field-dressings. And there were many other dead bodies, besides these two, in that abandoned trench.

Our Ensign faced round and retraced his steps the way he had come, for he was fearful lest he should walk into the German lines if he went any farther. On his return he noticed many little signs that had escaped him in his previous haste,—remains of food spread out on tables in the silent dug-outs, old books and newspapers, sodden and mud-

stained, some gum-boots lying in a pile behind the trench, a woollen waistcoat hanging on a nail in a ruined shelter; it was a desolate, uncanny place, and our Ensign was glad when he heard the sizzle of bacon and walked into a bombing-post of the Welsh Guards, who were holding the right of his Battalion, and was put on his road for home.

The Battalion came out of the line on a chilly Sunday afternoon—the approach trenches were so good that reliefs could be effected by daylight—and marched to a camp in a forest, charmingly situated on high ground outside a large village. The forest had not been touched by shell fire; only the trees had been thinned a little to make room for the huts and tents. The ground was clean, not fouled like their last sylvan camping-ground in the wood of M——, and the green moss made a soft carpet under their feet. There were a series of camps where the whole Brigade was lodged, and the black-roofed huts and the white bell-tents made a pretty picture spread out among the trees, the blue smoke from the wood fires curling up between, and vistas of forest glades on every hand.

The Brigade spent a very agreeable two days in the forest. The weather completely reformed itself. A fine warm burst set in, bringing out all the healthy, resinous odours of the woods. The men exulted in their surroundings—a wholesome change, in truth, from their long nights burying

the dead in the rain. When their day's work was done, they sat about in groups on the mossy ground under the trees and smoked and yarned. And (tell it not in Gath!) they sometimes contrived to have rabbit for supper.

There were a lot of Guards in and about the forest. Our Ensign, route-marching with the company, used to meet them on the road. Such encounters generally started the men on anecdotes and reminiscences of the old 4th (Guards') Brigade, extending back to the days of the Retreat from Mons. In conversation with each other the men always referred to the Guards by their different nick-names, most Guards' battalions having a sobriquet of some sort. Thus the Coldstream are "the Coalies," the Scots Guards, "the Jocks," and the Irish Guards, "the Micks."

Every morning the drums of the different Guards' battalions in the camps roused the echoes of the forest (and everybody generally) with the stirring strains of the *Grand Réveille*: every evening at Retreat, in the dying sunshine, they made the woods resound to their music until that pause came, bringing every man instinctively and by anticipation to his feet, after which the fifes squealed and the drums rolled out the National Anthem.

The company messes, which were all lodged in one long hut, had a great dinner to celebrate their coming out of the Line. Ah! those first dinners when the Battalion

comes out of the trenches! Will the future—that dim "After the War," which is the great European query-mark to-day—ever see their like? I doubt it.

How mind and body exult when you have had a hot bath, and there is the cool caress of fresh linen next your skin, and you have cast off your soiled uniform and heavy boots and changed into another jacket and comfortable trousers and shoes, and the port has come from Christopher's, and the mess-sergeant has procured a melon! The past is shoved behind you, with its blood and mud and evil odours; the present is all high spirits and grateful relaxation; and as for the future, you give it not a thought. Yet the future was there, though the Guards in their forest camp did not realise it—somewhere out there beneath that patch of starry sky framed in the low mess door, somewhere in the Unknown where the guns throbbed faintly in the night.

Their next halting-place in their wanderings was no less pleasant—a large comfortable village which had almost escaped the flow of humanity towards the Somme. The barns where the men were billeted were spacious and clean and dry; milk and butter and eggs and vegetables were obtainable in plenty; and there were beds for all the officers. The whole Brigade was billeted in the village, and made its entry down a long slope leading to the main

street, with drums beating at the head of each long column of dusty, sun-browned men—a brave show.

Peter and our Ensign had a knotty point of military law to settle with respect to their billet. Is an *estaminet con-signé à la troupe*—that is to say, put out of bounds for troops by the Assistant Provost-Marshal for some contravention of the regulations—likewise out of bounds as a billet for officers? For they were not using the *estaminet* part of the establishment—they were merely to sleep in a bedroom above it.

Madame and a mild-mannered old gentleman, who turned out to be her husband, together with three or four peasants, seized upon this tortuous point of law when Madame very frankly stated her case to the two officers and debated it ardently.

"*Ce sont les artilleurs,*" Madame sighed, "*qui sont venus comme ça boire de la bière à la porte du derrière . . . on est seule, n'est-ce pas? On ne fait pas attention, n'est-ce pas? Et puis, voilà, le Prévôt-Maréchal qui vous consigne pour quinze jours! Mon Dieu, c'est dur!*"

The husband echoed—

"*Sapristi, c'est dur!*"

And the peasants, removing their pipes to spit, chanted in chorus—

"*Bien sûr que c'est dur!*"

The upshot of it was that Peter and our Ensign, deciding that the bedroom was not the *estaminet* within the meaning of the Act, passed

a very comfortable night on good beds in Madame's exceptionally clean room. They likewise purchased for a five-franc note two very plump white and grey lop-eared rabbits, which the *patron* carried grimly into a back-yard and brought back neatly and expeditiously slain. The mess waiter fetched them across to the mess, and they formed the *pièce de résistance* at dinner that evening.

When troops arrive in a village out at the Front they swamp it: they make it their own. Within an hour or two of the Guards' arrival in this comfortable French hamlet, neat little boards or flags hung outside the different billets clearly indicating who lodged there, the Headquarters and billet guards were mounted, and, with their clothes brushed and their faces shining with the recent vigorous application of yellow soap and water, the men strolled out in groups to see what refreshment local establishments could offer, and also to buy those sentimental picture post-cards in which all soldiers delight.

The main street simply overflowed with troops, big and brown and tranquil; and for an officer to pass along was to run the gauntlet of a never-ceasing fire of salutes.

That evening Operation Orders announced that on the following morning the Battalion would march on. And our Ensign found himself entrusted with the duties of Billeting Officer.

CHAPTER VII.

Just contemplate the Billeting Officer's parlous position. The briefest period of grace is conceded to him, in which he and his accomplices cycle furiously ahead of the Battalion to distribute the billets in the area allotted to them. Even as the Billeting Officer, dusty and damp-browed, receives, on arriving at his destination, from the Staff Captain of the Brigade the list of billets set apart for his Battalion, he can hear, with the ears of his mind, the Battalion marching towards him with the leaden feet of inexorable destiny. Every minute brings them nearer; every minute shortens that brief breathing space in which he must complete all his arrangements and present himself, calm and unruffled, with a complete map of the locality in his mind, at the entrance of the village, to lead the incoming troops to their quarters.

The Billeting Officer must combine the organising genius of a William Whiteley with the quickness of decision of a Napoleon. He must be gentle as the dove, cunning as the serpent. He must be all things to all men, firm with recalcitrant peasants, persuasive with fussy beldames, glib with weary and fractious officers who look for beds when there are no beds.

The Billeting Officer must be an optimist, unfailing and uncompromising. He must survey the world through the

rosy spectacles of the house agent. As in the house advertisements in the newspapers, so to him all residences must be "stately" or "well-appointed," all villas "pretty" or "charming," all rooms "lofty," all barns "spacious."

He and every man of his Billeting Party are cold and calculating egoists. The four Quartermaster-Sergeants of the Battalion who accompany him are, each and individually, solely concerned with securing the best billet for their own companies. The Pioneer Sergeant has come forth to seek the largest and roomiest barn in sight for the housing of the Quartermaster's stores; the Drill-Sergeant is heart and soul devoted to the interests of the Orderly Room, the Guard Room, the Medical Inspection Room, and quarters for the signallers and the Drums; as for the poor Billeting Officer, tossed to and fro like a shuttlecock between all these conflicting currents, his dominant idea is to find some kind of decent billet for the Commanding Officer and Headquarters. Nor must he ever lose sight of the fact that, if he gives the officers of his own company anything like good quarters, he will unload upon his own devoted head all the lightnings of the other company messes.

The Billeting Party, headed by our Ensign, set off on bicycles on a delicious summer

morning for the village of F——, the next halt of the Brigade, on what some one called its "one-night stands" about the country. The faithful Johnson had procured for his "master" from the Signalling Sergeant a bicycle, which, in consideration of a little cleaning and oiling, ran somewhat better than army machines generally do. On the road they fell in with billeting parties from the other battalions of the Brigade, and on the face of each Billeting Officer dull care had graven a deep furrow.

Outside the church of F——, an ugly bogus Gothic structure, red and staring, like the picture on a child's box of bricks, the Staff Captain met them by appointment, and handed each Billeting Officer a list setting forth the numbers of the different billets at the disposal of his Battalion. Every house in the war zone in France bears a number stencilled on the door, and underneath, an entirely fabulous computation of the numbers of "Hommes" or "Chevaux" that can be lodged there.

Billeting at F—— was unusually easy. The barns were large and in good repair, and the local inhabitants, while somewhat resigned, were friendly. The four companies were allotted billets without difficulty, and even the Drill-Sergeant found quarters for all his different charges. But accommodation for the officers was a different matter. Our Ensign found lodgings for the four company commanders,

tant bien que mal; the Interpreter, who was of the party, arranged with the local curé to put up the Chaplain; and our Ensign kept in his mind's eye a certain *coquet* little red-brick villa, marked down on his list as affording accommodation for five officers, for the Headquarters billet.

But at the very door of the villa disaster was lurking. Two dragon officers met them in the garden.

"Is this billet free?" asked our Ensign with fear in his heart.

"No," said one of the dragons promptly; "there are five of us in here—Corps cavalry—been here for weeks."

"But it's down on my list as our billet," objected our Ensign.

"I know," was the calm reply; "we've had about six fellows before you after it—I've told the Mayor to scratch it off!"

Our Ensign looked at the list again. Then he saw a tiny smudge, which on closer investigation proved to be an asterisk. "Probably occupied" was the note he read at the foot of the page.

The list was exhausted—none of the rooms they had seen would do for Headquarters; so our Ensign, with the optimism of the Billeting Officer nascent in his breast, started to look for a clean bivouac where Headquarters might be accommodated in tents. They presently found a large grassy orchard which seemed suitable for the purpose. It lay behind a farm, where our Ensign duly

demanded the requisite permission.

An extremely dirty, red-eyed old woman was the *propriétaire*. She had a large, bare, and very dilapidated room, swarming with flies, which she offered; but she resolutely set her face against letting the orchard be used.

She wagged her old head stubbornly.

"Non, non, non!" she croaked, "*j'n'veux pas! La dernière fois les soldats ont joué au ballon dans le verger . . . ils ont tout abimé . . . j'n'veux pas!*"

Our Ensign explained with much persuasiveness, but with a horrid fear in his mind that the Battalion would arrive any instant, that only officers would be lodged there who never played football, and who, by their very presence, would prevent the irruption of *ballon-kicking* soldiery.

Then the Interpreter took a hand and drew a superb word-picture of the innate courtliness and good behaviour of every British officer—of these officers in particular—and of the Commanding Officer most of all.

The old harridan began to yield.

"*Mais, bien sûr,*" she muttered irresolutely, "*ils vont casser mes arbres . . .*"

The Interpreter spoke again. These officers were rich and generous. They would do no damage, but any damage they might do would be paid for: of that she might rest assured. The officers would buy her chickens, her butter, her eggs: the noble young man at his side

was even at that moment ready to invest five francs in the produce of the farm (this on a whispered suggestion from our Ensign). She would be reasonable; she would not regret it.

Then, at last, the old lady gave way.

"*Je veux bien, alors,*" she said, "*pourvu qu'on ne va pas jouer au ballon!*"

Thus it was settled, the double-company mess was installed in the old lady's room in consideration of a *douceur* of 2 francs 50 a day, and our Ensign rushed away to the entrance of the village to await the coming of the Brigade.

The Brigade arrived with its usual punctuality in a cloud of dust behind the Drums, each Battalion being taken charge of by its Billeting Officer as it marched in, the quartermaster-sergeants leading the different companies into their billets. The men swarmed into the farmyards and dumped their packs and rifles in the barns, then lined up in the yards of their billets for the customary foot inspection—in bare feet, their boots and socks in their hands. The cooks, all smoking, with their begrimed attendants trudging behind, lumbered into the billets, the little billet-boards appeared outside gateways and doors, the guards were mounted, and then the officers, dusty and hot, came streaming into the messes where the mess servants, surrounded by dogs and oats and poultry and small children, were unpacking the mess-boxes and getting lunch.

Our Ensign walked up to the Mess to receive congratulations on the success of his arrangements. He was given a chilly reception.

"I suppose we have the worst mess in the place," said Roderick gloomily; "the cobbler's children are always the worst shod, and the Billeting Officer's mess always gets the rottenest accommodation!"

"I can't imagine," said El Capitan, one of the company commanders, "why you put me to sleep next door to X. I have to go through his room to get to mine, and you know how he hates being disturbed!"

"I suppose you've arranged for tents," said somebody else darkly; "of course the simple life is very healthy and all that, but there's the devil of a storm blowing up, and what sleeping out in the open in your beautiful orchard to-night will be like, the Lord only knows!"

Then the mess waiter, entering, informed our Ensign that there were no potatoes: could he get some anywhere? That Madame would not allow the cook to make a fire in the courtyard: would he speak to her? That they had sent up word from the medical inspection room to know whether the Heavies were entitled to be in the same billet: would the Billeting Officer mind stepping across there and seeing about it?

Our Ensign put down his drink untasted, and holding his head in his hands, staggered out into the hot sun-

shine. In the street he met an ensign of one of the other companies, dusty, doleful, and dejected.

"Got a good mess?" he asked our Ensign.

Our young man assumed an air of Christian resignation.

"Nobody could have a worse mess than we've got," continued the other, and added pointedly, "but, *of course*, you're all right!"

Our Ensign laughed bitterly and went his way. Black is the lot of the Billeting Officer.

But when he returned to his mess the soothing influence of luncheon had worked wonders. The gramophone was playing, and the mess beamed at its late victim over its coffee and cigarettes. The sun was shining brightly out of the blue sky; the tents were being pitched in the orchard; altogether life had assumed a fairer hue. The gust had passed. And our Ensign, eating his lunch, reflected that campaigning is, after all, but a series of gusts: a gust of pleasant days, a gust of bad ones; a gust of easy times, a gust of unfortunate incidents and "strafeing," when everything seems to go wrong; a gust of peaceful wanderings like the present, and then a gust of war, of stern reality, the gust to come.

That afternoon some of them took horses and rode across to visit the adjacent "Grottoes," which, according to the Interpreter, were the principal attraction in the way of sight-seeing in that part of the country. In the village out-

side which the Grottoes were situated, our Ensign came across The Lad, whose Battalion was billeted in the place. The Lad, with a party of his brother officers, was, to our Ensign's intense delight, engaged in heated controversy with his Billeting Officer. As few things are harder to bear than the annoyance of a good example, so is nothing more consoling to the victim of injustice than to see his fellow in the same pass.

The Grottoes consisted of a series of high-roofed caves and narrow galleries cut out of the soft chalk, and running far into the bowels of the earth. To the archæologist or geologist they would doubtless have proved of enthralling interest, for the old gentleman who had made their exploration his life work, had filled case upon case with those chipped and dusty fragments of flint in which the scientific mind rejoices. To our Ensign and his companions the main interest of the Grottoes consisted in the fact that they were beautifully cool, and also that the Germans were known to have made good use of similar caves in such fortified villages as Beaumont Hamel and Les Bœufs.

The young French girl who showed them round by the light of a candle informed them, with all the glib fluency of the professional guide, that in feudal times the Grottoes had been quarries in which the serfs quarried the chalk for local lordlings, and that at different periods of history the caves had afforded refuge

to various bands of brigands, including some jolly fellows rejoicing in the name of The Flayers of the North. Refugees had found sanctuary there in the French Revolution, and at the time of the Prussian invasion of 1870 the civil population had likewise made the caves their hiding-place.

"The Grottoes extend for two kilometres," wound up the young French lady; "one franc is the charge for the whole trip: fifty centimes for the shorter journey."

"How far did she say?" asked one of the visitors.

"Two kilometres," replied our Ensign.

"Tell her we'll give her a franc and take the short trip," came back the reply . . . and Science hid her head. . . . "I want my tea!"

As they paid the girl at the entrance, before going away, our Ensign asked her if she were the regular guide.

"*Avant la guerre*," she answered, "*c'était mon père qui faisait le guide. Mais lui et mes deux frères sont partis pour l'armée et depuis, il n'y a que moi et ma sœur qui restent!*"

"Are they all right, your father and brothers?" somebody asked.

"*Papa est tombé à Verdun*," she replied; "*un de mes frères est prisonnier en Allemagne: l'autre est encore là-bas, au front!*" And she wiped her eyes.

You can't move far in France to-day without stepping into the shadow of the people's mourning.

Then they went back into the blinding sunshine, and, mounting their horses, clattered back to F—. At the horse-lines, where they left their horses, they learnt that "Retreat" was to be played in the main street of the village by the massed Drums of the Brigade. So they all strolled off to the main street and found tattoo in full swing.

It was a good show. The broad street running between the long, low, white farm-houses, with big gateways opening into the square courtyards, was thronged with men from the different battalions of the Brigade. Tall and sun-burnt and well brushed, with their cap-stars and buttons well burnished, they lined the sides of the street, leaving the centre of the road free for the passage of the Drums.

In F— was quartered a labour company of Senegalese, extraordinary nightmare objects, loose-limbed, lanky negroes, with coal-black faces seamed with tribal cuts, grinning from beneath high yellow tarbooshes, round the edge of which their thick woolly hair was fuzzed out, huge pouting lips, and a highly comic attire consisting of voluminous jebbabs of coarse canvas, snowy white, reaching below the knee, baggy white trousers, and heavy marching boots. Parties of these weird-looking creatures were now scattered about among the thick lines of Guardsmen, jolly as only negroes can be at the sound of music, grinning with a white flash of teeth, and

chattering volubly in their African lingo. They were an extraordinary company, and their morning parade with picks and shovels, before going out to work on the roads, was the most excruciatingly funny thing a man ever saw.

Down the centre alley, between the lines of men, came the Drums, four drum-majors with their staffs in front. Behind them came the side-drums, the drummers' hands raised high and falling together, the tenor drums, the fifes and the bass drums. On reaching the top or the bottom of the street, as the case might be, the leading files turned and marched through the succeeding files, each rank following suit.

It was a great moment for the Drums. The whole Brigade was in the street, from the Brigadier downwards: every eye was on the Drums, and the Drums bore themselves right gallantly. They crashed through all the well-known marches, to which the Brigade had trudged many a weary mile in France, and then came the crowning moment, the march based on the regimental airs of the Brigade of Guards.

One after the other the old familiar tunes rang out, amid a roll of drums that made the very windows rattle, — "The British Grenadiers," of the Grenadiers; "Milanello," that quaint, jingling march which the Coldstream picked up in Spain, and of which tradition says the original Spanish words are unprintable; the Scots Guards' "Hieland Laddie," the frankly joyous "St Patrick's

Day" of the Irish Guards, and the sonorous "Men of Harlech" of the Welsh Guards.

After the fantasia had ended in an abrupt crash, the Senior Drum-Major marched stiffly across the street to the Brigadier, and, saluting, asked for permission to dismiss. Then every officer's right hand went

to his cap and every man stiffened to attention as the Drums played "God Save the King," the tones of which, both on land and sea, announce to the fighting forces the coming of night.

The next day the Brigade moved on again.

CHAPTER VIII.

Take a large French village, shell it a little and bomb it a little from aeroplanes so that all the windows are broken and most of the roofs damaged, remove the civilian inhabitants, pass several hundred thousand troops through it, plant horse-lines all round it, so that every road approaching it is churned into a morass by the horses' hoofs, make the road running through it one of the main arteries leading into battle, and choke it—day and night—with marching troops and motor ambulances and long strings of lorries, smear it alternately with layers of dust and mud, add several billion flies—horse-, house-, and bluebottle,—pop in a hundred thousand rats or so, bring back a few score civilians to take possession of the only whole houses remaining, and serve hot—extremely hot—and stinking. And there you have the village of M—, the Brigade's next halting-place, as it presented itself to our Ensign and his billeting party about the hour of noon on a blazing hot day.

Behind them they had a

twenty-mile cycle ride, under a fierce sun, against a violent and exhausting head-wind. And now, soaked to the skin with perspiration, covered with dust, thirsty, tired, and (to speak for our Ensign only) extremely cross, they pushed their heavy machines up the long slope of the main street amid a dense mass of traffic and clouds of petrol-scented dust.

They were early for their rendezvous with the Staff Captain: in fact, they had more than half an hour to spare. They stacked their bicycles together outside the Town Major's office, which was to be their trysting-place, and forthwith went their several ways in search of shade and refreshment, to meet again at the appointed time. Our Ensign was carried off by a billeting Coldstream officer to a Y.M.C.A. establishment, where, among more flies than our Ensign had ever seen together before, they quaffed some cold, green liquid, retailed at a penny a glass as lemonade by a bespectacled Hebe (*masculini generis*) behind the cake-laden counter. Our

Ensign and his brother officer absorbed several glasses of this refreshing beverage, and then went forth to find the Town Major.

He was sitting in his office, a large, clean-shaven major of infantry, urbane and charming. He mopped his brow, and sighed when he saw them enter.

"Oh dear!" he groaned, "you keep on coming in, and I haven't the least idea where you are all to go. I do hope you're not expecting anything great in the way of billets: you'll not get 'em here. Half the place is in ruins, AND the dirt! AND the smells! You never saw anything like it! Oh, damn these flies!"

He whisked his handkerchief round his head.

"Well," he continued, "I think there's some Perrier left: I believe I got the last case in this part of the country: and I expect there will be some whisky, too. Come along into the garden: the rest are there!"

His frankness boded ill: like Billeting Officers, Town Majors are generally optimists, and chatter gaily about the "unexceptional advantages" of the billets in their domain. The two officers followed their host in silence into the garden, where they found the other Billeting Officers of the Brigade, in various stages of exhaustion, conversing in gloomy tones over the Town Major's whisky and Perrier.

The garden was a dirty backyard contrived so as to collect all the sun's rays as in a

burning-glass. It commanded a view of a flat green field in which the principal object was an abandoned incinerator.

In due time the Staff Captain appeared and distributed the billeting lists. He, too, was brutally frank about the accommodation: they had best expect nothing, he told them. Our Ensign found allocated to his battalion a short patch of houses in the main street, opposite and on either side of the Town Major's office. The list looked promising enough: several billets were marked down as furnishing accommodation for as many as a hundred men at a time: one even—as shown on the list—would take two hundred. But as soon trust a company prospectus as a billeting list; the element of truth is about the same in both.

It was a quarter to one when our Ensign started his round of the billets. The billeting parties had come across country on their bicycles; the Brigade was going to cover part of the journey by rail and march the rest; they were not expected to arrive before three o'clock at the earliest, so our Ensign felt that he could take things fairly easily.

The peasants were not friendly—and why should they be, poor creatures?—returning, with the French peasant's fatalistic attachment to his native soil, to find their houses wrecked, their gardens ravaged, and their barns and sheds occupied by an ever-changing succession of foreign

soldiers. They came to their house doors and pointed silently to the barns and outhouses about the yard, then shut the door in our young man's face.

Things went all right at first. Everything was filthy and swarming with flies, everywhere the ground was befouled, and in many of the once trim gardens, amid the full-blown roses and the straggling and broken lines of peas and scarlet runners, water-logged and evil-smelling dug-outs were crumbling into oblivion—mementoes of the days when the German artillery was close enough up to shell the French troops in their billets. But our Ensign managed to get billets for three out of the four companies, though most of the places had holes both in the roof and in the wattle walls. He intended to put the remaining company in the billet noted as accommodating 200 men.

This was where the billeting list let him down badly—an act of base betrayal. For the farmer came out of his house at the officer's summons and announced, politely enough but with great firmness, that the *granges* were no longer available, for the harvest, which was to be brought in that afternoon, would fill them to the rafters.

Here was a staggering blow indeed. The whole Battalion was provided for except the officers; and now, unless the Town Major could allot them another billet, the whole billeting scheme would have to

be rearranged and a quart crammed into a pint pot—that is to say, a thousand men packed into billets for 750.

Back to the Town Major's office our young man went. It was already half-past two; neither Headquarters nor the messes nor the officers had yet been provided for. The Town Major was out. He had been carried off by the Brigade Medical Officer, who was clamouring for a site for the field ambulance. Sending one of his party to watch the entrance of the village in case the Brigade should appear before its time, our Ensign set off feverishly on the track of the Town Major.

It was three o'clock by the time that our young man had found him. There was no sign of the Brigade as yet. Heedless of the clamouring throng of petitioners at the Town Major's heels, our Ensign resolutely button-holed him and poured his pathetic story into his sympathetic ear. Our young man's desperate situation stirred the generous heart of that Town Major.

"The harvest again!" he groaned, clasping his brow. "I'll go and see what I can do with the fellow, but I fear we are undone!" As they hurried up the street, he explained to our Ensign that, by virtue of some dark arrangement between the British and French authorities, the peasants had the right to claim exemption from billeting to make room for the crops.

The Town Major's fears were justified: the farmer was

in the right; his position was incontestably sound; they would have to forgo the billet.

Together, the Major and our Ensign inspected two other billets — “emergency billets” the Town Major called them, the last two in the place. One was occupied by an artillery store, but they contrived to filch from the gunners accommodation for one platoon; the other was a gaunt barn, open all along one side, with shell-holes in the further wall, and the corrugated iron roof abundantly perforated by shrapnel.

Our Ensign shook his head, thanked the Town Major, and fled. The whole billeting scheme had to be rearranged. He picked up his billeting party once more and started the round again, reshuffling the billets, redistributing the men, cramming in half a platoon here and tucking little packets of men away in there, deaf to expostulation and entreaty, coldly ignoring the dismay in the faces of his quarter-master-sergeants.

Half-past three! No Brigade yet: now for the officers . . . two or three in this empty room, with sacking stretched in front of the paneless windows, and the mess across the entrance-hall in a dirty apartment, where fat bluebottles hovered greedily about decaying fragments of bully beef; this silent and forbidding house, to which they obtained access through a window, with three filthy little rooms, would accommodate six or seven officers—say, the members of the

double-company mess: some tents could be put up in the garden at the back; another mess here, the company commanders there . . . but where, oh where, to put Headquarters?

There was nothing suitable under a roof, but our Ensign remembered the field with the incinerator behind the Town Major's garden. Four o'clock: not a drum to be heard: the Brigade was late: back to the office to obtain from the ever-patient Major a lien on the field. Done! and three tents promised into the bargain in case it rained that night and the billets leaked.

It had already started to rain when our Ensign, his appointed task over, hastened down the village street to the cross-roads by the river by which the Brigade would come in.

There he found his fellow-billetters in the Brigade, each with his tale of dirty billets and leaky roofs and swarming flies, each with his story of the treachery of billeting lists, for the harvest surprise, our Ensign found, had been sprung on them all.

They waited patiently in the rain for hours. The traffic never ceased to pour into the village in a double stream, going in both directions to and from the battlefield, troops and guns and transport and ambulances and motor-cars. A red-capped sergeant — of military police stood on point duty at the cross-roads, immutably calm and affable amid the confusion and the din; eternally side-

tracking strings of horses, which were not allowed through the village, and which persevering grooms, well knowing the prohibition, hoped yet to be able to get through, patiently answering inquiries from dust-powdered lorry-drivers who had lost their way.

The shades of evening deepened gently amid a depressing drizzle, but still the Brigade did not come, still the traffic flowed past without a moment's break.

"It looks as if the Brigade were not going to arrive until after dark!" said one of the Billeting Officers; "and in this squash there'll be the most holy confusion—the Lord help us!"

A Grenadier subaltern, who had discovered a wayside café just past the cross-roads, led some of them to it. None of them had had anything more substantial than a sandwich since breakfast, and they demanded food. All that Madame could produce was a box of wafers, very sweet and sickly, which they ate with some excellent coffee which Madame prepared over the stove.

Outside night fell, muggy and wet. Then the Brigade transport, which had come by road, arrived, a long train of rumbling limbers, with the Transport Officers on horseback. They had no news of the Brigade, but a little later a staff car, which the Billeting Officers stopped, reported that it had passed "some Guards or other" on the road about two miles back.

And then at last they came

. . . at eight o'clock. The dark and the traffic notwithstanding, the Guards made their entry to the tap of drum, and, despite all forebodings, each battalion got safely tucked away in its billets. When he reached the mess our Ensign found that his brother officers had so many remarks to offer on the slowness of the train that had conveyed them, and the general inefficiency of railway transport in particular, that they altogether omitted to comment on the nature of the billets which he offered them.

Though the sleeping quarters were indescribably bad, the actual mess-room proved to be better than might have been expected. It was a room in a small farmhouse occupied by a Frenchwoman, whose husband was in the trenches, and who, after the gifted Apollo had talked to her a little in his most Parisian French, proffered her services as cook. And so, while the traffic rumbled, and the rain splashed down outside, they made a good dinner, and eventually repaired to their squalid lodging in excellent spirits. There they found their sleeping-valises spread on the dusty floor, and there they laid them down to sleep, promising to turn every available servant on to swabbing in the morning.

M—— proved itself to be every bit as bad as it had promised. The billets were positively filthy, and for days the battalions of the Brigade swept and garnished and burnt, filling in the rubbish pits which

gaped, stinking, in every garden, and leaving a trail of chloride of lime behind them wherever they went. Fly-papers and fly-swatters proved illusive against the indomitable breeding energy of the flies, and only days of unremitting hard work contrived at length to abate this very disagreeable and very unhygienic pest.

It rained for days on end. In a few hours the deep dust of the road turned first to a thick morass of mud, and then into a liquid lake of slime which flowed across the gutters to the very gateways of the billets. To avoid wading in mud up to the ankles, the men built little causeways to bridge the gutters, using the bricks from the more dilapidated houses, and laying branches on top. Nearly all the billets leaked, and the yards, filthy as they always are abroad with a vast and sodden midden-heap in the centre, were ankle-deep in slush. What was possible to do with tarpaulin to stop the gaps in roofs and walls was done, but while the rain lasted the men had a very thin time, which they bore, as all men do in France, without grudging, reserving their grumbling for superficial and insignificant details, as is the way of the British soldier.

The billets were so bad and the weather continued to be so wet that a rum issue was ordered, though the season of the daily rum issues had not yet arrived. An officer superintended the issue of rum to each company, for the regu-

lation is that each man must drink his tot on the spot where it is issued, in the presence of an officer—this to prevent hoarding and its attendant evils.

Accordingly, our Ensign found himself one wet evening attending the issue of rum to the company. On the floor of the barn stood a lighted candle, the centre of a number of mess-tins representing the portions of the different groups in the company. At our Ensign's side was the Company Sergeant-Major with the rum-jars. Silent and expectant, the men stood all around and in the yard without.

The Company Sergeant-Major poured the rum out into the different tins, announcing as he did so the name of the recipients—"No. 5 Platoon," "The Cooks," "The Pioneers," and so on. Then, after much shuffling about in the outer darkness, the men got formed up, mess-tin in hand; but before the first received his noggin, the Company Sergeant-Major put to our Ensign that time-honoured question, "Would he try a little drop?"

Rum on an empty stomach before dinner is not to be recommended, but our young man knew what was expected of him, and with suitable gratitude accepted the offer. About a mugful of raw spirit was thereupon poured out for him, greatly to his dismay, but he picked it up, and crying "Here's luck!" drained it. The rum burnt his throat and brought the tears to his eyes,

but he finished off the portion and held the mug upside down, as the men do, to show that it was empty—all this amid profound silence, with every man's eye upon him. Then, one by one, the men emerged out of the gloom into the yellow circle of light, with outstretched tin or mug, received their portion, tossed it off, inverted their drinking-vessel, and moved away, wiping their mouths on the backs of their hands. When every man had been served, the Company Sergeant-Major picked up the last tin, and, tipping it down for the officer to see the contents, said—

"For the sergeants and myself, sir!"

This last portion was divided between them and consumed. Then the C.S.M., shaking the rum jar, said—

"There's some left yet, sir."

"Everybody had his tot?" asked our Ensign.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Right," answered the officer; "tip the rest out!"

(For such is the inexorable rule of the Army: what is left over from a rum issue must be spilled. Rum does not keep.)

"Sir!" replied the C.S.M., and in obedience to the order he emptied a brown gush of the spirit upon the earthen floor under the sorrowful gaze of the men. Our Ensign would have gladly given them an extra tot all round, for the night was raw and chill, but an order is an order. . . .

And now the Guards found

themselves within measurable distance of the ultimate goal of all their wanderings, the Battle of the Somme. Day and night the little village street resounded to the tramp of marching columns, to the thunder of the jarring, quivering trains of ammunition lorries. In that cramped and crowded village the only parade-ground was the dirty courtyards of the different billets, where the most stentorian word of command would often be lost in the roar of traffic from the street.

But while the stream of men and munitions flowed unceasingly eastward towards the Somme, from the battlefield came daily reports of further successes. Every sign pointed to the imminent participation of the Guards in the great offensive. There were frequent conferences, and, day after day, the Guards marched out by platoons, by companies, by battalions, past the little military cemetery, past the vast camps stretching away to the horizon, past the gangs of grubby German prisoners working on the roads, to the training-ground, where the coming attack was rehearsed in every detail. There were field-days and night operations and lectures and several false alarms, . . . warnings to be in readiness for immediate departure, which were afterwards cancelled.

A few days after the arrival of the Brigade at M—, the Guards' Divisional Canteen turned up and installed itself in the main street, and was

followed shortly afterwards by the Guards' Divisional Cinema, which was set up in that very barn with shrapnel-riddled roof which our Ensign had rejected as a billet. Tarpaulin supplied the missing wall, a little gas-engine furnished the power, and on the many wet evenings that the Clerk of the Weather bestowed on the Guards at M——, "the pictures" proved a great attraction. There, on one of the rare fine afternoons, our Ensign and a large party of his friends sat in a stifling atmosphere and saw the Semme battle film. Save for a few gunners and sappers, the whole audience consisted of Guardsmen, and their comments on this celebrated series of pictures were instructive — for they made none. They only cheered and laughed every time "Fritz" was seen on the screen.

The Guards' Divisional Baths — a travelling concern this, that plants itself in any empty building that seems adapted to the purpose, or, in default of such a building, erects its own premises — happened along with its array of tubs and heating apparatus and vast supplies of towels and clean shirts, socks, and underwear. Every day parties of men were marched down by an officer under a scheme that ensured to every man one bath a week.

There was much entertaining between the different Messes. Everybody was always dining

out with one or other of the company Messes in the different battalions, with the Brigade machine-gunners, or with the Stokes Mortars, who are charming fellows, but whose propinquity in the trenches is unpopular owing to the disagreeable tendency of their murderous weapons to draw fire.

In the double-company Mess all went as merry as a wedding bell. Madame, in whose house the Mess was lodged, proved herself a jewel and cooked them wonderful omelettes and ragouts, and a *Potage Bonne Femme* before which Escoffier himself would have doffed his hat. The Mess raged and wrangled and argued, as young men do the world over, but the underlying good fellowship was never disturbed. The past tense is ever a kindlier critic than the present, but our Ensign, looking back on those pleasant summer days, cannot recollect that there was a single discordant element in that little band of men.

But the sand in the hour-glass had all but run out. At last the word for their departure came. And Battalion Orders that evening closed with a significant paragraph. Under the heading DRESS, it ran —

"The polishing of buttons and cap-stars is discontinued until further orders."

A bon entendeur, salut!

(To be continued.)

THE SCENE OF WAR.—VIII.

THE CANAL.

EVER since the War began, Egypt has played a vital if not a capital part in its progress; for Egypt is the Suez Canal, and the Suez Canal is a highway of the World. If you came upon it suddenly in the course of a journey across the Desert, you would see it lying there with the silvery sand-hills upon either side of it, a mystery asleep. Even if you had never heard of it before in your life, you could not mistake it for any ordinary water; it lies there so solitary, and silent, and unreal. You would ask yourself who made it? and why? and as you looked up its course from North to South, where it emerges from one sand-waste to pass on into the wide spaces of another, you could not but wonder whence it had come and whither it was going. What gives it its power is just this definition of purpose, as of something directed to a single end, and there is something appropriate, therefore, in its having sprung from a Frenchman's brain.

It is more, too, than a Canal, for it is a part of that mighty element upon which our sea-power moves and has its being. If one could know the number of men and guns and implements of War (not to speak of the traffic of the world) that have travelled upon this narrow road since the conflict began, the record might be full of

interest. We shall doubtless know some day.

Yet it is more than a highway, for it is the moat also of a great citadel. Egypt lies upon one side of it, the desert sands of Sinai upon the other. It is the only waterway in that land of weariness and thirst. To hold the Canal, then, has been to hold Egypt from invasion, and to protect from harm an artery of the Empire.

These circumstances have made it of singular interest to many thousands of our people, for to many this journey along the Canal has offered their only glimpse of War. From end to end of it they have seen nothing but soldiers and guns and white encampments, cavalry on the march, camels moving along the skyline, military trains and convoys, the Flag of Empire. There, upon that hillock of sand, is the barbed wire of which they have heard so much; there, sure enough, are the sand-bagged trenches; and there, standing guard upon the parapet of a fort, his bayonet gleaming in the fierce sunlight, his body erect if unimpressive, is the British soldier. To many, therefore, this transit from one continent to another, across a third, has been charged with the subtle joy of romance, almost of adventure. They have been taken by the hand and led for once in their lives along the Parapet of War.

The tide of events is ever moving on, and what was true yesterday has ceased to be true to-day, and may take a different form to-morrow. I shall give away no military secret, therefore, if I relate some of the incidents of a voyage on the Canal in the spring of this last year. It began at the Red Sea end, and as we approached Suez, a white fog that was half composed of the desert sand enveloped us and hid the world from sight. We might have been anywhere on earth, except for the sand and the locusts that were blown upon the ship's deck. For twenty-four hours we lay enveloped in this veil. But when it lifted, there was the magical perspective of Egypt, the iron hand of War. Across the yellow sands of the desert a regiment of Indian Cavalry was moving at a rapid pace along the Asiatic shore. Upon the other side the hills of Africa, enamelled with amazing colours, plunged their pedestals in the turquoise sea; and in the lustrous water between, a battleship lay at anchor, brooding over the gateways of the Canal.

We embarked upon the Canal, the desert closing in upon us on either hand. An Anzac horseman in khaki, with a bandolier of cartridges upon his breast and a plume in his hat, came down to the blue edge and cantered along beside the ship. As we neared each encampment, the men swarmed out of their tents and came plunging and running over the sand-hills to see

the ship go by. An officer on board smiled indulgently as he saw them come.

"I was encamped there myself," he said, "before I went to Mesopot, and every time a ship came by, I felt the temptation of going down to look at it. Well, you see, it was going Home, and one liked looking at the women and children. I do not suppose you have any idea of what a ship looks like to a man who has been camping out there in the desert?"

In the Canal itself hundreds of them plunged about and swam in the waters, their bodies burnt to a biscuit brown, their hands and faces almost black from exposure to the sun. Blue eyes look odd out of a tropical skin. If the passing of the ship was a source of enjoyment to the men on shore, it was no less diverting to the passengers on board.

"Where—are—you—from?"

"Syd—ney: Austri—li—a."

"And you? where are you from?"

A feminine voice—

"From In—dia. Bom—bay."

"Good Luck to you! Go—od Lu—ck."

And then a laugh, with half a cry in it.

"See, Dick; look at that man. He is an Australian; come a long long way to fight for the flag."

"Yes, Mummy; don't you think I could go and swim with him in the water?"

Such are the innocent dialogues that pass from ship to shore: covering Heaven

knows what emotions of pride and sacrifice.

Simultaneously with these there is a rush for the barman's stock of cigarettes, and the tins go flying through the air to the man in the water, some falling short in mid-canal, others touching the banks; the former to the powerful swimmers, the latter to the khaki crowd which is gathering in increasing numbers, the men simply rolling down the sand-hills in their desire to arrive. To the tobacco there is added a tempest of books and newspapers, and the blue stream is littered with novels afloat and rafts of picture papers. Each one of these gets home with more or less of adventure. Upon the banks, where the barbed wire comes down to the water or a sandbag fortress makes a line against the sky, a sentry stands looking covetously upon the tins of good tobacco floating at his feet. The British soldier stands firm, resisting the temptation; the Anzac, throwing discipline to the winds, makes a fierce dash at his prey, and, seizing it, returns to his place, hoping that he has not been seen by some blamed officer. There is a story they tell you here of a Commander-in-Chief who desired that there should be a little more saluting when General Officers rode by. The next time he passed this way a hundred naked men at play in the water rose up from it, stood to attention, and gravely saluted His Excellency. It is

Australia, indeed, with its inextinguishable spirit of youth, that greets one here. These men in the water are of the superb Anzac build, and you ask yourself, in the case of some of them, what kind of women they are that bear such sons?

Upon the foreshore there are ingenuous devices in white bits of stone, showing Australia upon the one hand, the British Islands upon the other; midway a heart, with the legend,

*"We are all parts of one
mighty Empire."*

It is the best of all the bonds that time can bring.

There is a singular contrast between these men on shore and the travellers on board. From the Commander's deck an ex-Viceroy, for whom this place of privilege has been reserved, looks down upon the scene with a lustrum of history behind him. He has held what is perhaps the greatest office in the Empire; he has ruled with a personal touch over 315 millions of people; he has been to them in a sense the physical embodiment of the Crown, which many of them worship; and of all these people he has been in his innermost heart one of the most lonely, for the office claims its sacrifice. If you could look into the mind of that Anzac soldier on guard on the sand-hills, and then into the mind of this great officer of State, trained through generations to fill a high place in the world, you would find

an astonishing difference of outlook, yet always with the one great thing in common: you may call it what you will.

Upon the common deck amongst the other travellers, his little girl, who has not been in England for five and a half years, flies with extreme swiftness from starboard to larboard, laden with gifts, and uncertain which side of the ship offers the greater strategical advantage to the bestower.

In a quiet corner a nun, soft-footed and silent, paces gently up and down, hushing to sleep another woman's babe. Every gesture and action of her is eloquent of a soul that is at peace. She is earliest of all the passengers on board in her black robes, reading her breviary, or looking quietly out to sea. Tranquillity abides with HER.

There is another figure scarcely less notable, the old Rajput chieftain, Sir Pertab Singh,¹ also to be seen in the early morning light seated on a rail in an old shooting-coat and a pair of Jodhpur riding-breeches—he never wears anything else—benevolently gazing upon the files of men at exercise. There is a profound contentment upon his face also, the look of The Happy Warrior. *One charge, one bullet*, sums up his philosophy, and it is not a bad one to live up to in these times.

These two stand apart from

the rest of the company, in a sort of mysterious kinship. The gentle woman and the brave old knight have, I suppose, this in common, that they have accepted their vocation once for all. Upon each of them there lies the benediction of complete fearlessness, and the grace that comes of doing that which the heart most longs after.

Sir Pertab Singh is the more talkative, and those who know him can guess the kind of racy and vigorous speech that flows from his lips. His command of English is limited, but he seldom fails for want of an expressive word.

"When Lord Roberts die in St Omer, Sir Douglas Haig ask who ij his oldest friend?"

"Then every one say Sir Pertab."

"That very true. When Lord Roberts young subaltern, I boy of fifteen, and ride at head of my troop. Many English ladies and children I looked after in those days—Mutiny days."

"Any good news of War, Sahib, this summer? Ha! You think will be hard fighting? Something for Cavalry to do? Yes?"

(*Folding his hands*) "Oh, I very happy; I burning charge. Die in bed not good thing for sojer. Die in battle, old Rajput custom; much the best."

"So happy to be going back to Front. Never would have come away had Viceroy not ordered me to return for my

¹ Lieutenant-General His Highness the Maharajah Sir Pertab Singh of Idar, late Regent of Jodhpur.

nephew's coronation. But very ashamed. My name Singh, you know, means Lion. Rear not proper place for Lion; proper place for Fox. So when I came back—Viceroy's order—I wrote to my friends, only Pertab; no more Singh. Very much ashamed. But now returning to Front, can say Singh once more.

"What I think of War?

"Always will be War; two lions cannot live in one cage. Germans? brave men; but not gentlemen. No!

("Lady, you take my chair. Yes, yes. See, I very comfortable on floor. Ah! thank you.)

"Ha! ha! my father very strict with me when boy; no bed allowed; had to sleep in box; good hard box; only room for me and my sword.

"English army too comfortable, I think. Too many plates, forks, spoons, knives. One quite enough for sojer. French? Oh, French very good sojer, very brave; and French women very wonderful—say to man, you go and fight, we look after everything. Don't worry. Wonderful people. Like Rajputs.

"General's staff? No! no! not for me. I live with my regiment, Jodhpur Lancers; proper place for me."

I was reminded of these brave words when upon the Somme I asked for His Highness. He was nowhere to be found.

"Wonderful chap, old Sir Pertab," said the General, replacing the telephone receiver. "They don't know

where he is at G.H.Q.; F— thinks he is camping out somewhere with his regiment."

And somewhere there he was, amidst the dark squadrons of the Cavalry Brigade, fretting behind the battle for the hour of impact, that last great charge of the Rajput Prince and gentleman.

Froissart would have loved him; for he belongs to those gallant and courtly days when the world was younger, when France and England met upon the fields of Crecy and Poitiers.

He is accompanied at the Front by his son, a handsome, dark-eyed lad of fifteen, who acts as a sort of body-squire, writing his letters for him, cleaning his accoutrements, keeping his accounts, and faithfully carrying out his father's somewhat imperious behests.

"Your son is rather young, Sir Pertab, for the War."

"Prince of Wales also is young," is the conclusive rejoinder.

As the ship moves on it is indeed of those bygone days that one is reminded, rather than of modern war. The desert sands are patterned by the white tents of the English host; and as the sun goes down, and the short twilight fades across the level spaces, the gleam of a hundred fires, the shadowy figures of men moving to and fro, the lustrous stars in the clear firmament, recall the days when King Richard rode his great war-horse to the gates of Ascalon, and the Oriflamme blazed over the heads of the Crusaders.

THE WAR IN EGYPT.

It was at a later stage that I was enabled to visit our Expeditionary Army, and to gain some impression of its activities, through the personal kindness of General Sir Archibald Murray. Few people realise the character and the extent of our efforts in this field of the War, though the despatches that have been published from time to time state the salient and principal facts. At the outset, the object in view was purely defensive. It was known that the Turks, inspired by their German owners, would attack the Canal and attempt an invasion of Egypt. It was their hope that this would stir up the religious feelings of the Moslem communities, plunge Egypt itself into a rebellion, and cut this great artery of the Empire. But to do so, it would be necessary for them to march across the Sinai desert, across a country which is one of the most barren and thirsty in the world, and remote from any real base of supply. Their attack was therefore awaited on the banks of the Canal itself.

By dint of quite extraordinary efforts, which could not have sufficed for any purely European army, these long-suffering troops, driven by a stronger will than their own, reached the edge of the Canal, only to sustain there a fatal repulse. They had carried across the desert a number of iron pontoons, and one or

two of these even reached the Egyptian shore. One can see them there now, riddled with bullets, in the gardens of the Canal officials, derelicts of this attack that was doomed to failure. The principal fight took place near Serapeum, upon the edge of Lake Tim-sah, when the *Hardinge*, an armed vessel of the Indian Marine, drew the greater part of the Turkish artillery fire.

It is, upon such a day as I saw it, a singularly quiet and pleasant spot. The blue waters of the lake spread about one, with scarcely a ripple on their surface; colonies of white gulls and sea-birds fly about and make this their home; the sand-hills, where they come to meet the lake, are as smooth and flawless as the snow of high altitudes, with swelling domes and clean blade-edges of singular beauty of line. Upon the banks of the Canal itself there still linger traces of the positions held by our troops; on the Asiatic shore the sand-bagged bastions and trenches, and the emplacements for our guns; and on the west bank, under a grove of *Casuarina* trees that sigh and sway with a peaceful melancholy, where an Egyptian battery bore itself with honour.

The Canal itself, although in many ways it offered an ideal line of defence, with its fresh-water canal and the resources of Egypt behind it had two substantial defects. It presented a front of a

hundred miles, and every yard of that front was of vital importance to its existence as a highway.

The Turkish plan was to threaten it at several points,—at Kantara, Ferdan, Ismailia, Shalouf, and Suez,—but to make one big effort at Tous-soum-Serapeum where the desert intervenes between Lake Timsah and the Great Bitter Lake. Upon our side it was necessary, while protecting the whole of this long line of battle, to be able to concentrate at the principal point of attack. For this purpose outposts were established at regular intervals on the Asiatic shore; armed launches of the Royal Navy sped to and fro between these posts; a railway line ran parallel to the Canal upon the Egyptian bank, with troops and waggons in reserve; and at intervals where the Canal widens into the Salt Lakes there were torpedo-boats and ships of war with their heavy artillery: the *Swiftsure* and the *Ocean* from England, the *Requin* and the *D'Entre-Cas-teaux* from France. It was from France also that there came the seaplanes that reconnoitred the desert, and with the help of our own airmen brought news to the General of the advancing enemy. Of them he wrote: "I cannot speak too highly of the seaplane detachment in reconnoitring the Syrian and Anatolian coast. Lengthy land flights are extremely dangerous, yet nothing ever stopped these gallant French aviators from any enterprise."

The Comte de Sérionne, a kinsman of De Lesseps, at the head of the Canal officials, placed all the resources of the Company at his disposal. To those who know the long history of French and British rivalry in Egypt, the story of the Canal itself, there must seem something peculiarly happy in this earnest co-operation to a common end.

On the 18th of January the French seaplanes brought news of an army of 10,000 men assembled at Beersheba, that ancient settlement that still marks the limit of Palestine. A week later the first conflict took place in the desert near Kantara, the enemy having seized the caravan road that skirts the Mediterranean to El Arish. On the 1st and 2nd of February 1915, bodies of the enemy were to be seen at various points on the Canal, and in the darkness of the following morning they made their effort at Toussoum, firing their rifles and machine-guns as they advanced, and making the best of the batteries of field artillery they had dragged across the yielding sands. All who crossed the strip of blue water were killed or taken, and those who fought upon the eastern shore were driven from the trenches and positions they had hastily prepared. It was a futile attempt, and had it been possible to follow them up at once with a strong mobile force, few could ever have returned to their native land. As it was, their dead lay upon the edge of the waters, and far and wide over

the desert sands, as they fled like the children of Israel across the wilderness. A small cross, inside a wired enclosure upon the sand-hills where the ships go up and down, marks the grave of a German officer—a Major Von den Hagen—who fell in this battle.

In the sum total of this wide war it was only a small fight perhaps, but it saved Egypt, and it kept open the road.

Those who took part in it were assembled here from the four corners of the earth. There were Yeomanry and Territorials from English counties, New Zealanders from Auckland, Otago, and Canterbury; camelmen from Bikanir, where the sand-wastes spread mournfully as they do here; cavalry from the uplands of Mysore and Hyderabad; contingents from the States of Alwar and Gwalior; regiments from the Panjab plains, from the snow-crowned valleys of Nepal, from Singapore, and from Hong-kong upon the edge of the Pacific.

There is a deep significance, for those whose ears are attuned to such music, in these distant names.

Amongst the princes and noblemen who were present in this area of the War were the Maharajahs of Bikanir and Idar, the Nawab Sir Afsar-ul-Mulk, Colonel Desraj Urs, and Mahomed Akbar, the Khan of Hoti. An Egyptian battery distinguished itself in the action at Toussoum—one of its men who was killed, the Mulazim Awal Effendi Helmi,

showing, in the words of the General, conspicuous gallantry, and fighting his gun under a heavy fire at short range. An Indian sepoy brought up ammunition under heavy fire nine times, and each time carried a killed or wounded man back 800 yards to the dressing station. Another, Havildar Muhammad Azim, of the 92nd Panjabis, was wounded in the side, but remained in action encouraging his men; was present when the enemy surrendered, and marched back to camp with the guard on prisoners, refusing any attention to his wound till he got in.

The Turkish effort was doomed to failure—in any military sense it was nothing more for those engaged in it than a forlorn hope; but in the wider strategy of the War it served its purpose, and confirmed, if such confirmation were needed, the value of initiative in war. That this narrow and vulnerable water should have survived the War is itself a remarkable tribute to the excellence of our arrangements. On the Canal, at least, we may say that "Business has been as usual."

The Turkish attack having failed, the defeated troops withdrew into the centre of the peninsula. The fierce heat of midsummer descended upon the shores of the Canal, and for a time all expectation of a further advance in force passed away. The centre of gravity shifted to Gallipoli, where the Turks were gathered for the defence of Stamboul, and many

thousands of our troops from Egypt were engaged upon that brave adventure. Such military activity as there was in Egypt was upon the western border, where the Senussi, "becoming more and more truculent," eventually met us in open conflict, and sustained a decisive defeat, in the course of which the British Yeomanry and a fleet of armoured cars, under the Duke of Westminster, played a striking and effective part. The frontier post of Sollum, which had at the onset been abandoned to the enemy, was reoccupied, and in little more than three weeks we had cleared the country of the enemy for a hundred and fifty miles, had captured the Commander, had taken all his artillery and machine-guns, and had driven his scattered forces far beyond the Egyptian frontier. This was at the middle of March 1916.

In the Soudan also, Ali Dinar, the suzerain Sultan of Darfur, at the instigation of the enemy, proclaimed a Jihad, and sought to overthrow our power. The flower of his army was destroyed in battle, the tribesmen rushing to the attack with the utmost desperation, only to die within ten yards of our line. At the same time the maintenance of a line of communications 300 miles long, over a waterless and roadless country, and the carriage of heavy material of war, cost us a considerable effort.

Meanwhile greater events were afoot in other areas of the War. Serbia was overrun

by the Central Powers. In December 1915 the allied French and British forces, under General Sarrail and Sir Bryan Mahon, fell back after hard fighting on Salonica. By January the last of our troops in the Dardanelles had abandoned the Gallipoli Peninsula, and transports, laden with our men and blocked with munitions of war, were streaming across the Mediterranean to our base in Egypt. To an observer able to survey the scene and conscious of all it meant, this passing of our armies must have been of the deepest interest. The pen of a Thucydides were needed to describe this *Peripeteia*—this latest of the great migrations across the historic sea. The streets of Alexandria and Cairo were thronged with our soldiers; and the banks of the Canal, even to the eye of a passing traveller, were thick with infantry and cavalry and guns.

Circumstances indeed brought me at this period to Egypt, and I remember feeling that never in my life had I seen so many of our people assembled for war. On the other hand, our withdrawal from Gallipoli had released large forces of the Turkish army, and a quarter of a million men were now at the disposal of our enemies for the invasion of Egypt.

It was at this dramatic hour that the present Commander-in-Chief arrived in Egypt. To wait to be attacked on the banks of the Canal was not judged compatible with the true prin-

oiples of strategy, as indeed it was scarcely consistent with the dignity of the Empire. The plan adopted was, while strengthening the defences of the Canal, to advance across the Sinai Peninsula and drive the enemy from the invaded soil. The Russian victories at Erzeroum, in the middle of February 1916, facilitated this policy. The Turkish armies in Syria dwindled to 60,000 men; large bodies of our own troops were released for service in France, and, with the approach of the hot season, it became plain that the grandiose plans of the German Staff for the invasion of Egypt had ceased to have any reality.

It remained for us to press forward and resume our hold over the Peninsula. The Canal itself ceased to play so important a part in this wide-world War, and the stir and movement of men passed on from its blue edges to the wide spaces and the ruffled hills of the desert.

If you look at a map of this country, which from time immemorial has been a buffer between the fertile valley of Egypt and the war-like peoples of Arabia and of Palestine, you will observe that there are in the main three routes across its inhospitable surface. The most southerly of these runs from Akaba at the head of the Gulf of Akaba through Nakhl, where the Governor of Sinai resides, to Suez. This is the road that the Pilgrims of Islam follow on their way to

the tomb of the Prophet at Mecca. It leaves to the south of it the mountainous tracts of the Peninsula as they narrow down towards the sea.

The middle route, taking off from El Audja on the Turkish frontier, with Beersheba as a base of supply, traverses the Peninsula through the Megara hills and the Djebel Yelleg, to find its bournè at Ismailia, midway upon the ribbon of the Canal. This was the road followed by the Turkish army in its attack upon Serapeum and Toussoum.

There remains the north road, which skirts the fringes of the Mediterranean Sea, through a country of sand-dunes and occasional oases, from Rafa, hard by the land of the Philistines, and El Arish, to Kantara on the Canal. This is the only route along which water is found in any considerable quantity; and this circumstance and its proximity to the sea have marked it now, as they did when Napoleon carried his divisions across it to the siege of Acre, as the only suitable road for the advance of a European army.

The history of our campaign in Egypt throughout the year 1916 has been the history of our advance along this thoroughfare, with some minor defensive measures along the banks of the Canal. Between January and June miles of road, miles of pipe-line, and miles of railway were constructed to these ends. At Katia, the Turks, anticipating our advance, made a sudden

raid upon our vanguard with momentary success; and there was sharp fighting between them and our Yeomanry, the Australian Light Horse, and our Flying Corps. But our troops remained on the field, and the advance slowly moved on upon its inexorable course. The world has learnt by now that when once we put our hand to the plough we do not easily turn back.

In July and August the enemy once more endeavoured to resist our progress. Austrians and Germans and Turks, with mountain-guns and howitzers and machine-gun units, came on with considerable valour to what has become known as the Battle of Romani. There followed some close fighting, in the course of which our cavalry and mounted troops especially distinguished themselves, and Scotsmen and Welshmen, Australians and New Zealanders, drove the enemy, 18,000 strong, from point to point, along the northern road—from Katia to Bir-el-Abd, and beyond it, in their retreat to El Mazar and El Arish. Four thousand of his prisoners remained in our hands, with batteries of Krupp guns and large quantities of his ammunition.

Since then our advance has continued; slow it may be, but sure. The Desert Railway has advanced from hour to hour; El Arish has been taken, the Anzac Light Horse once more distinguishing themselves; and at Maghdabah, a little to the south of El Arish, our mobile columns have annihilated a detachment of the Turkish troops, capturing 1350 prisoners. The limits of Egypt have been reached, and the future lies upon the knees of the gods. Yet it is worthy of notice that Jerusalem lies no long distance beyond, the very heart of Palestine, and there is a magic in such names as Gaza and Ascalon, Jaffa and Acre; while a little farther to the south there runs the Hedgaz Railway, which connects the Turkish province of Syria with the tomb of the Prophet, and the territories of His Holiness the Sharif of Mecca.

So much it has been necessary to say, in view of the ignorance that prevails, of the Egyptian campaign. But it is with things seen that these pages are concerned, and I will therefore conclude with my personal impressions of the War as I saw it in Egypt in the early days of December 1916.

ISMAILIA.

From Port Said, where a great French battleship filled the vista with her mighty frame and panoply of guns, and De Lesseps, that great Frenchman, whose genius gave

us the Canal, looks out across the sea, I went to Kantara, where the station was thronged with our soldiery under arms, and thence to Ismailia, the central base of the Canal defences.

Time has softened the harshness of this settlement won from the desert sands, and the fresh-water canal has filled it, as it would fill all this wide waste were enough of it available, with trees and gardens, and lawns and flower-beds, and the pleasantness of life. It was not so twenty years ago. Then, as I waited here in the old Shepheard's Hotel, I thanked Heaven that my lot was not cast in this rectangular townlet mapped upon the sand. It is another place now. In the General's house, where his courtesy had made me a passing guest, I was in a garden enclosed. There were roses upon the walls, a lawn that was like velvet, and a Bougainvillea that spread like an Emperor's robe over half the building. Outside the gate a British sentry marched up and down in the shadow of the trees, stopping at the end of his beat each time that he turned, to go through some ceremonial or ritual of his own. Across the way the Count de Sérionne's house rose in its cluster of trees and flowers from a similar garden, whose latest ornament was one of those riddled pontoons from Boche-land that the Turk had brought with him across the desert sands. And on the road itself there was all the charm of Egypt. The *fellah* went by on his little donkey, his feet almost touching the ground, a smile of contentment on his one-eyed face.

I asked him why he had only one eye.

"When I was young," he

said, "my mother took no care of me, and the flies came and sat upon my eyelids, and I got blind. It is so in Egypt."

"But why," I inquired, "did you not lose the other eye?"

"Oh," he said, "you see, when one has lost one eye, one is more careful of the other."

I was struck with his remark, for in the East one is in the vein for parables. Gallipoli, Kut, Servia, and new Roumania—these, I said, not to speak of Belgium and Poland and an eighth of France, are the one eye that we have lost.

Under the trees of the tasseled avenues a soft riding-track was laid for the use of horsemen of a morning; beside it there gleamed the pleasant waters of the Fresh-water Canal; the blue sky was patterned with the tracery of sailing-boats, their masts and cordage. In the rich fields, and upon the edge of the shining waters, the *fellah* in his blue *gelabieh* was at work; the women went by in their black garments, their faces veiled but for their vivid antimonied eyes, their brazen pots shining like gold upon their heads.

It was a picture of Egypt, and as one looked upon it, it might have been here for a thousand years. But upon the bridge that opened at times to let the *dahabeahs* pass, there stood a British sergeant in command, and across its swinging track there passed grey horses that had come from English fields, and military waggons upon which the khaki drivers sat erect and firm, call-

ing to them in their clean, peremptory words, "*Now then; now then; steady there;*" and out of the desert beyond the trees there came a line of swaying camels, nose to tail, the long-robed camelmen shuffling beside them, their long sticks in their hands; and the avenue of overarching trees was filled with this pageant of the timeless East up to the very edge of the waters of Lake Timsah, where an Admiral's flagship shimmered in the increasing glare of the sun.

From the General's house I went on to that palace that was built in the summer of 1869 by Ismail, that Superb Spender, for the reception of his princely friends at the opening of the Canal. The record of those days is pure Arabian Nights. Outside there were giant forces at work that were to wreck the happiness of France, and exalt the Hun to that giddy pinnacle that has been too much for his untempered brain; that were to plunge Egypt itself and the gorgeous Ismail into years of adversity and bondage; but within, like Belshazzar, there sat the Giver of the Feast, with the lovely Empress of the French upon one side of him, the Emperor of Austria upon the other, and the Crown Prince of Prussia, a lesser light in that shining company.

Sedan and the German Empire were not yet—though very near at hand.

Over a million pounds, we are told, were spent upon these gilded ceremonies.

It is another place to-day. As one looks out from a little window across the tawny sands, one's eye is caught by the march of a desert column on its way. There go the dark squadrons of the British Yeomanry; the guns ploughing without a sound through the yielding sand; the stolid Infantry; the long interminable lines of the ships of the desert. They move like the diameter of a great circle. The desert enfolds them, and they are lost in the shining void.

Upon the other side, deep down below the parapet of Ismail's palace, there gleams the blue ribbon of the Canal. Its foreshore is thronged with the traffic of War, and a movable pontoon spans its waters from sand to sand. A lone ship goes by bent upon some business of its own, its name concealed from the eyes of a curious world. Beyond, there spreads the vast and dazzling expanse of Lake Timsah, which it took the Canal, they say, five years to fill. Its surface, in the blinding sun, is like the surface of a gigantic heliograph upturned to the sky. On the far horizon of its waters one can trace the faint outlines of the ships growing slowly larger, and taking substance and form as they steal onwards from India, Australia, China. The suggestion of these things is of an infinite loneliness, touched only here and there by the passing phantoms of men. War and Peace follow each other—each

war in its day the engrossing and fearful event of the hour; each interval of peace like some static thing that men believe, or hope, may last for ever: but nothing stays. Even the desert and the sea and the everlasting hills change and change perpetually, and the universe draws on to its secret goal.

Those days when Ismail lavished his gold, and the world partook of his magnificence, seem very far away now; but in truth they were not so very long ago. The Emperor of Austria, the Crown Prince of Prussia, Ismail himself, are dead; but there is one who still lives on who saw the German Empire arrive, and is likely to see it pass, like others, into the void.

A good deal, it seems, can happen in the space of forty-seven years.

From Ismailia I visited more than one of those lateral thrusts into the desert which mark the defensive of the Canal. But one feels that their day is over. There is the road that takes one there, the encampment in the sand-hills, the barbed wire, the sand-bagged trench, the fort, and behind these a football ground, even a church. But the church is visibly in decay, the road is only moderately good; and it is no secret, perhaps, that in fort and trench there are no longer as many guns and men as there were a year ago. The tide of War is moving on.

THE DESERT EXPRESS.

I left these things, therefore, and crossing the Canal at Kantara, ran into the swarm of a great base of supply at that interesting terminus. Here was also the starting-point of the Desert Railway that is moving steadily on its way across the sands to Palestine. There were donkeys here, and mules and horses, carts and waggons, and engines that screamed, and long trains that rumbled in, disgorging and carrying away large bodies of men. There were guns too, and piles upon piles of "munitions." An aeroplane lay with its wings spread out upon the level plain, where the camels grumbled

and the one-eyed drivers ambled about in blue.

The train itself was no *train de luxe*. A third-class carriage with wooden seats was the sole accommodation reserved for superior travellers. Into this a motley throng of officers poured—Highlanders and Anzacs, infantry men, cavalry men, and Staff.

Upon the mud platform a subaltern officer of Engineers surveyed the traffic with a glass in his eye; a fatigue party of men loaded a wagon with planks; horses came up and were rapidly entrained. Every space was occupied, and the train suddenly set forth with a loud scream from the

engine, and a series of violent and dislocating jolts that flung us all into each other's arms. The Desert Railway does not concern itself with the lesser amenities of life. Its function is to get there, and this it does with considerable travail and substantial success.

I shall not attempt to describe these long hours, that weary road upon which so many men of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force have travelled. For me they were more than redeemed by the incidents of the wayside, the lure of action. As I looked out across the wilderness, I saw a regiment of Yeomanry on the march—the plumes of the Anzac Horse. Once the Colonel of a regiment galloped across the sand and rode beside the train.

"Are you all right in there?" he said, waving his hand at the horses.

"Yes, sir; doing fine."

"Well, just tell So-and-so that I shall be at Katia tomorrow; and look here——"

A good horse can keep level with the Desert Express, and the Colonel, as he galloped, jumping the scrub, was able to say all that he had to say.

At a wayside station the Egyptian Labour Corps were busy digging, the broad backs and strong sinews that built the Pyramids, as useful as of old. It was a good-humoured company of men who sang a verse from the Koran as they toiled in unison.

As the train went on, we passed in succession each one of those places in the desert that has gained a temporary

fame under the magic glass of War. There was Bir-el-Duweidar. Then there was Katia ("where alone there is sufficient water-supply to maintain a large body of troops"), where the Turks fell upon and slew a number of our Yeomanry, and were pursued in their subsequent retreat by the 5th Australian Light Horse; and a wing of the Royal Flying Corps made a bomb and machine-gun attack from a low altitude on their beaten troops. There was Romani, across the sand-hills, where the battle of August 1916 was fought, and 9000 casualties were inflicted on the enemy; Bir-el-Abd, "where all the baggage-camels and ammunition-mules of the enemy detachment were destroyed in the course of a sharp action"; and finally, Mazar, the base for the coming attack upon El Arish.

The train came to a halt; it was an hour to sunset, and the scene that set in was one of indescribable animation. From the carriages the officers and men jumped out, throwing their kit out on to the yielding sand; the horse-vans emptied, the horses' ears twitching with excitement, their eyes bright with interest; the mail-bags were piled in a mountainous heap, upon which a fatigue party fell with the cool decisiveness of the white man, rapidly sorting out the bags for each regiment. These had come straight from England, labelled and ticketed from there with precise instructions—a precious freight. As each separate

heap was collected, it was rapidly transferred to the backs of the camels, whose grumbling protests rose above the babel of sounds. Many of these were of the beautiful white Bisharín breed, and as they moved off one by one against the reddening sky, under a guard of cavalry or camel patrols, they made a picture of singular, almost romantic, charm.

For when you come to think of it, a letter means a great deal to a man who is far from home.

Let us climb up to this sand-hill, where the Base Commandant is at work from very early morning till late at night, and take a wider view of El Mazar. First you will observe that a parapet of sandbags is laid about each of these tents; and at certain points there is a sandbag dug-out for use in an emergency. Yesterday the enemy's aeroplanes flew over the encampment and dropped a number of bombs, causing a certain damage and loss of life.

The sound of voices chanting steals over the desert above the louder din of the traffic. The day is closing in with a crimson splendour, and across the pageant of colour an aeroplane flies low, like a giant hawk on the wing. The desert, far-spread to the ultimate horizon in dunes and hollows that are like the waves of the sea, reflects the magic of the sky. Tints of rose sweep over it—the blues of violet and heliotrope, the ultimate greys of night. The stars begin to shine in the

clear Egyptian sky, and the face of the desert twinkles with the lights and fires of the vast encampment. Down in the hollows the camels kneel in rows, feeding from the sand-troughs, their long necks stretched out, their drivers seated before them, quiescent, like images of blue porcelain. In his tent near by, the Intelligence Officer is seated upon the edge of a camp-bed, immersed in a group of Turkish deserters. It is a long long story, of much winnowing for a little corn. Time and patience and perseverance; goodness, firmness, "a smile and a stick": these are the solvents of the East.

And there is another contrast. As the night closes in the British encampments become plunged in silence (save where a Scottish piper plays upon his pipes, the wild music filling the desert void with its ancient cry); but from the Egyptian swarm, from the labourers and the camelmen as they sit about the leaping fires, there rises far into the night the murmur of speech. If you could catch it all upon one vast cylinder and unravel its thought, you might learn something of the souls of these people who have changed so little in five thousand years.

Not so very far away from here there is the sea, and desert though it is, this place has echoed to the solemn tramp and march of history. The Pharaohs knew it, and the Ptolemies; the firm hand of Rome lay upon it, and Islam swept across it with its kindling banners. Napoleon slept here, his slumber gilded by majestic

dreams of Eastern Empire—a second Alexander; and his troops fell here by the way-side, dead of wounds and thirst and plague as he walked beside them, flung back from Acre, brooding upon his star.

AUSTRALIAN CAVALRY.

From El Mazar I rode out with a little group of Australian horsemen to the encampment of the Anzac Cavalry Brigade. I do not think I have ever enjoyed anything more in my life. The sand-dunes of this coast, which at first sight present an appearance of inextricable confusion, have in reality been built by wind and weather upon a simple plan. They run roughly in long valleys parallel to the sea, and our way across them lay transversely from north to south. Hence it was that at one moment we rode upon the crest of a hill, with the face of the desert wide and inscrutable about us; and at another were involved in the hidden trough of a valley from which there seemed no outlet. Upon the northern slope of each dune or wave of sand the wind had built a domed surface, comparatively though not wholly easy of access; but upon the south it fell like the inside of a wave, in a drop that was almost perpendicular, to the base of the following valley.

There was no track across this wilderness; a few snails alone found sustenance in the sand; there was no sign or symptom of life. No bird sang in the open heaven about us, no flowers bloomed at our feet. Yet life subsists even here. The silver sand was crossed

and recrossed by the footprints of the scarab, who goes here upon his business unconscious of a greater world, and millions of shells lay white and gleaming upon its surface. We were told that these were the manna of the Israelites. There were other witnesses, too, to this secret life of the desert, but a Fabre were needed to unfold the marvellous tale.

As we rode, the sand showed traces of previous horsemen who had passed this way; but we seemed to be following no apparent course, and I began to wonder how the officer who rode beside me could know his way, when upon the edge of a high dune we suddenly came upon the encampment of the Australian Horse lying at our feet. It was a simple affair of men and horses outspanned in a valley of sand, yet it was as full of charm as anything I had seen in the most splendid theatres of the War—upon the sword-edged Dolomites or the icy slopes of the Italian Alps. The gallant company in which I rode, the glamour of War, the romance of Empire, the deep underlying fascination of the desert, may have had something to do with it. I record only the sensation it brought me at the time.

As we bore down the hill and reached a small reed-hut which marked the Brigadier's

headquarters, a strongly-built man, with a plumed hat and the crossed swords of a General Officer on his shoulders, came out to meet me. I knew in a moment, from the thousand instant things that distinguish men of one world from another, that this was not a British General, and yet he did not seem to be of the lithe, clean-out, Australian breed, of which a number now gathered about us.

"I am General R——," he said, "in command of the Australian Light Cavalry, but"—and he laughed good-humouredly—"I am not one of them. I am a South African. My home is in Natal."

With this he gave me a hearty welcome into the reed-hut, where at a long table we sat like schoolboys at a feast, and partook of tea and cake and macaroons, the hour being eleven of the morning.

"Tea," he said, "is our national drink," and I presently found that it was so, and at all times and wherever the Anzacs were gathered together. We drank it out of mugs, and I heard some one saying, in the midst of our talk, that "the billy might be put on to boil again."

The "Staff" here consisted of two very young-looking officers with boyish faces; and from time to time other men dropped in in their shirt-sleeves and gripped me firmly by the hand. It would have rejoiced the heart of Bret Harte to have shared their company.

After a while, when it was apparent that we were all very happy together, the General

suggested that we should mount and review his Brigade. The horses were brought round, the sun shone with a dazzling glare upon the silver sands, and, the General leading, we rode through the long avenues of horses with shining skins, the carbines piled in pyramids of four, their butts embedded in the sand, the saddles and accoutrements, and the strangest, finest-looking body of men one ever saw in one's life. Some were in full uniform, plumed hats, and swords beside them, and others in their shirt-sleeves; and there was even one who stood in his shirt without any trousers on, and a twinkle in his eye.

"*Carry on, Boys; carry on,*" said the General as we passed along, wheeling from squadron to squadron; and every now and then he had a word of praise for the fine condition of the horses, the alignment of the equipment on the sand. As we passed from one regiment to the next, the Colonel rode up, superbly mounted, saluted, and fell into line. To one of these I spoke of the amazing physique of some of his men.

"Well," he laughed, "we do manage to grow them rather large. I am one of the small ones myself: six feet five."

He was every inch of that, and lean and sinewy as a lathe of steel. The badge of the Distinguished Order lay upon his breast.

"But I was actually born in Bombay," he said. "My father was a colonel there of Engineers."

With the squadrons encamped, there were machine-guns, and anti-aircraft guns for visiting planes, and camels, and steel waggons for transport. In a depression in the valley there was a long canvas trough that was being filled with water from a pump; and a number of men were bathing there in the sunlight, more naked than Adam after his fall. There was a hospital tent, from which there rose into the blue sky of the desert, beside each other, a Red Cross upon a white field, and the Empire flag dallying idly with the breeze. King Richard's pennon might have floated there with the same leisurely pride eight hundred years ago.

It was a singular mixture of ease and of the very highest efficiency that met my eyes. The horses were in the pink of condition, the men as hard as iron, and as supple as a tempered blade.

The General showed me his own tent. It was a bit of canvas spread over four sticks. His bed was like a sea-chest made of sandbags, with a single blanket to cover with, though the nights here are bitter cold in December. He washed his face in a horse-bucket, and shaved before a little mirror that lay upon an old packing-case. He told me in his modest way something about himself.

"I am only a farmer," he said; "but I have been fighting, off and on, since 1879. I was in the first Zulu War. I was through the Boer War too, and served under Lord Kitchener."

He bowed his head.

"It was HE made me what I am.

"When this war broke out, he asked me not to come to France, which was the desire of my heart, but to join General Botha in breaking the Germans in West Africa. He said I could be more useful there. So I went and saw the end of that campaign.

"I am only a drop in the ocean, of course. . . ."

It was in his "tent," sitting on the old packing-case, that he told me this; and an Empire that can draw such men to it from the ends of the earth seemed to me there a more wonderful thing than I had ever found it before.

"We will go on now," he said, "and ride out to my pickets towards the Megara hills."

We did so, and for my own part I was rather surprised that I ever got there, for this General of sixty rides with the fiery speed of a Rupert, and looks when he is in the saddle more like a centaur than a British officer. He carried me over those sand-hills that follow each other in long waves, mountainous upon one side, like the blade of a sword or the inside of a wave upon the other, at the rate of a whirlwind. It was an uncomfortable journey, but I found some consolation in the sight of his superb, unbending figure, and in the group of officers, some twenty in number, who rode beside him, colonels and aides-de-camp, their emu plumes fluttering in the breeze, the very pattern

of chivalry. Every one of these men rode with the grace of a cavalier, the southern warmth of Australia lending to the heavier British stock, from which they have sprung, the lightness and flexibility that are their special characteristic. There is, I should think, no cavalry in the world the natural equal of these splendid horsemen.

As we rode over the valleys and dunes, with the blue sky blazing overhead, my thoughts drifted away for an instant to an English hunting-field—the big horses and the big-set men, here and there a pink coat, the Master and the huntsmen, the pack moving as one across the grass, noses down, tails in the air, like a living carpet; the soft beautiful countryside, its trees and hedges and village spires transfigured in the island mist; and I perceived how varied is life, how by different ways men can come to the same goal.

There was another little scene also that I beg to record.

At Ismailia, in that house with the velvet lawn and the purple Bougainvillea and the disciplined sentry at the gate, I had sat at meat with half a dozen Generals, two at least of whose names are household words from the Cameroons to Mons, and the conversation turned, as it often does in such company, on the English public school. A junior officer was talking quietly, and a little proudly it might be, of Winchester.

"Ah," said a General with a pleasant humour, "not a bad

school that. How is it getting on now?"

"Oh, very well, sir, thank you. It is only a few hundred years older than another called Eton."

This sally delighted every one except the Corporal of the Guard, who waited behind the General's chair with the deferential solemnity of the well-born servant.

But at the Headquarters of the Light Cavalry Brigade the badinage took another form. It was about horses that they rallied each other.

"Not a bad horse that of yours, Lieutenant; that tail and mane of his would look well in a picture."

"Oh, thank you, sir, he's all right. Don't you feel a little sorry, sir, you didn't take him when you had the chance?"

The one loves his school, the other his horse. Now there is a great deal a man can learn from a horse.

We drew up at last upon the crest of a sand-dune taller than any other, and looking out towards the distant, faintly visible sea. It was as clean and immaculate as snow, of a silvery colour, beautiful in its roundness, sharp as a knife towards the south. In the shelter of the near valley four horses were picketed in the care of two men; while another two knelt on the sand, with a heliograph and their carbines handy beside them, looking out towards the Megara hills. They rose there, a ruffled line of red-blue across the skyline, sharply accentuated by the rolling ocean of sand.

"We know," said the Gen-

eral, "that the enemy are there (*Give me that map, Lieutenant*); but we do not know in what numbers they are, with what complement of guns. We have to watch them with the utmost vigilance. Our job is to guard the right flank of the British advance. It is true that they could not attack us here—if they came, as we have done, across the sand-hills—without being seen; but if they worked up quietly to the head of one of these parallel valleys, thousands of them might come down upon us in the course of a night and fall upon my Brigade without a man being observed till the moment of attack. We have pickets, therefore, all along a wide circumference, and heliograph and telephone communications. You see they are speaking to us now from that outpost."

And as he spoke, the bright light of the desert flamed with the twinkling flash of a mirror brighter than itself. And at the same instant the sky over El Mazar was patterned with little puffs of cloud, faint and repeated concussions filled the desert silence, and the eyes of us all were turned towards the

air battle that had suddenly come up between the enemy's planes and our guns. It is a spectacle that is always fascinating; but it is seldom so beautiful as it was here, in the midst of these mighty spaces.

We turned back from here, returning more slowly over the sand-hills to the headquarters of the Brigade.¹

I touched very gently upon the question of discipline in the Anzac armies.

"I have nothing to complain of myself," said the General. "You see, I know these men and understand their feelings. Their only fault is that they are too keen. If they are told to go forward to a certain point, they get there; but they cannot resist the temptation of going farther."

I smiled inwardly, for I seemed to remember something he had said about his going a good deal farther on a reconnaissance towards the Megara hills than was considered permissible.

"That is why in a battle I never lose sight of them. I keep in touch with them all the time; checks their impetuosity, you see."

¹ Mr Massey, writing to 'The Times' on the 21st December, thus describes this interesting country. He will allow me the privilege of quoting his words.

"I rode from railhead to El Arish with a mounted brigade convoy, and the country, seen by daylight, deeply impresses one with the remarkable character of the achievement of the mounted troops in the dark. For the first eight or nine miles there is an expanse of rolling billows of sand, with valleys gradually getting deeper, and the scrub sufficiently thick to relieve the glare of the sun. Then begins a series of higher sand-hills, with no cover for vegetation. The dunes have sharp crests, their sides in many places being as steep as cliffs and necessitating many detours. Hoof-marks on these gradients show that whole regiments often took a steep path in very yielding sand, while the seemingly impossible ascents achieved make one regret that this night-work could not be cinematographed, so as to show people at home how these intrepid horsemen get to their objective."

This time I laughed openly in the General's face. Was it not he who used up eight horses at the Battle of Romani? And what was that little story the Aide-de-Camp told me of a wounded leg, and an impatient Brigadier who would not dismount from his horse, and dashed off before the winding of a necessary bandage could be completed, with the end of it floating after him like a pennon in the breeze?

If I dwell upon these little things, it is because the Australian Light Horse and their Brigadier have shown since that day the splendid metal of which they are made.

At Magdaba, on the 23rd of December (little more than a fortnight from my visit), a correspondent writes—

"We lost no time in getting to work. By eight o'clock we had occupied a ridge 4000 yards from the enemy's position, and at nine o'clock the Imperial Camel Corps, supported by the fire of our batteries, advanced to make the frontal attack. This was followed by an encircling movement by an Australian Light

Horse Brigade and a New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade, which moved round the enemy's northern flank. Later in the day the General was informed by aeroplane messages that the enemy had been seen retiring. Our one object was to prevent any escape, so the Light Horse, &c. . . . Coming up under close-range fire, which threatened serious casualties among the horses, the brigade had to get back and dismount, but *the cool way the men handled their horses under fire, and the steadiness and precision with which they manœuvred at the gallop, were the admiration of all who watched them.* As the day wore on the attack was pressed, and the fighting became more and more severe. A regiment of the Light Horse Brigade swept round the enemy's left flank, and coming right in behind the position, brought about the surrender *en masse* of the Turks. . . . They had quite expected to be able to get away, but they reckoned without the Commander of this Desert Column and the keenness of his men."

SUEZ.

It is characteristic of the growth of the War, and perhaps also of human nature, that that army, like another that was deemed both "little and contemptible," is almost forgotten now. What are a couple of hundred thousand men in a host that is reckoned by millions? But suppose they had not been there, or

that worse things had been? The Boche hoped much from revolt in the East.

Suez itself is a miracle of beauty: a miracle, because out of some very unpromising materials—a desert, a range of barren uninhabitable hills, a shallow water, an old and dirty town with some modern embellishments

—it makes a harmony of the most exquisite colours. Its principal secret is light, with some added grace of form. But War also has come here to add to its manifest attraction.

My quarters were in the old town of Suez, in an encampment that is known as the Indian Base Depot. Here is a sort of clearing-house for those who come and go from East to West and West to East. There is a little colonel in charge who acts as a sort of father and mother to all these people. Everything about them he knows—their languages, their customs, their prejudices, the shortest road to their hearts. The War found him in repose, after a service of thirty years; it brought him back to the flag. Suez was where they sent him, but it might, for all he knew, have been Timbuctoo; and at Suez he has established himself firmly in the hearts of that polyglot colony. He has a French of his own for the wives of the Canal officials, a pat on the head for the Fellahin children, a uniform with ribbons across it like a rainbow for official use. And when the ships come in from India he is to be seen there renewing old acquaintances, exchanging news and gossip—he is a very clearing-house himself in that way—helping people on their way; and withal he is, I think, the only contented man I have met in my life.

Many years ago I played polo with him. At the end of each chukker he would come

up to the pavilion with a grin on his face and say—

“Ah! thank God for that.”

And at the end of his cup of tea—he was always of a frugal mind—he would say—

“Now thank God for that.”

And always with a twinkle in his eye and never a complaint about anything on his lips. Cheeriness such as his is a public asset in these hard days.

From the old town I went across in a lighter to Moses' Wells, where the Indian troops were encamped. There was a sort of field-day in progress. In a redoubt out there in the desert the General—they told me he was one of the few officers of his Sikh regiment who survived the Dardanelles—was standing with his Staff observing the progress of the battle. Infantry were moving across the sandy spaces, cavalry were galloping over the plain, the heliograph was flashing incessantly. The General was not satisfied.

“I bet he gives them hell,” said the officer of Rifles in whose company I was.

Beyond the plain, in the blinding glare of the desert sun, there rose the fractured uplands, the sharp peaks and precipitous outlines of the Sinai hills—the Djebel Raha.

All that was the enemy's country. A few days previous the brigade major, out there on a reconnaissance, was shot through the head. Through that pass, which is like a cleft in a stick, went many years ago, in the days of Gordon, a Cambridge professor with a bag of gold to purchase the

Bedawin tribes. He was killed there, being thrown with his companions—a Naval officer and another—from the edge of a cliff into the rocky valley. Beside me there bubbled with its mysterious working the pool that is known as Ain Musa, the Well of Moses. These wells are upon the summits of hillocks, which rise above the general level of the plain, and are fed from springs that are secreted below. They have been here from immemorial time, and have always seemed a miracle to the desert tribes. The children of Israel knew them as the Waters of Elim, and countless numbers of travellers have encamped beside them with their beasts, in the sparse shade of the palm-trees that grow by their edges.

Napoleon visited them.

They are like a fountain in a thirsty land; and the same need, the same purpose, bring us here to hold them as a fortress against the Turk. At the other end of Asia there is something like them in the mud volcanoes of Minbu; but neither man nor beast nor blade of grass prospers in that blistered neighbourhood.

In the midst of the palm-trees here, and upon the shining plain, there were squadrons of Territorial Horse from English counties, with regiments of Sikhs and Pathans—the white men turned brown, and the brown men turned black by the fierce sunlight.

I rode on over the desiccated foothills and billows of sand, Africa upon one side of me, Asia upon the other; past forts

and trenches, and long strings of camels, and huts and encampments, and machinery and field-guns, and all the lumber and stress of War. There was even a Turkish cemetery. But it was a receding tide that I looked upon—the last lap of conflict at this end of the shores of Armageddon. A fortnight later Sikh and Pathan and Englishman were to make good the road to Nakhil; and, for all I know, the Governor of Sinai—whom I saw at Ismailia in a little room, with aeroplane maps of Turkish entrenchments on its walls and the Desert News-Bringers outside in the care of his Bedawin Police—has resumed his patriarchal functions at that smallest of all the capitals of the world. The curtain is rolling up, and this coming year will show us the map of the world in very different colours.

At Port Tewfik I sat in the late evening upon the terrace of the International Club. There were Italians there, and Frenchmen, and Englishmen: soldiers and sailors. They were all talking about their own affairs and interests.

"Well, I expect to be going next week to Montgomery with the men of the Indian Camel Corps. They are being sent home for a bit; but we are keeping their camels (*in a lower voice*) for the advance on El Arish."

"Where are we going after El Arish?"

"H'm; ask me another. Jerusalem, perhaps."

"Or Jericho."

The Italians were busy over

the question of Trieste and the tiger-springs of Cadorna.

"Your Kitchener was like our Carnot—an Organiser of Victory. No! we cannot forget him. He fought for us in 1870. Kitchener and Carnot: these are names that we shall place side by side in our hearts, Monsieur. We must not forget our great men. Never!"

The speaker was an old Canal official, who belongs to the days when France and England were in perpetual conflict. But we have come a long way since then upon a better road.

Along the boulevard his wife and daughters were passing, typically French. At an open-air café some British infantry were seated, an Arab waiter drifting up and down from the tables on the shore to the café across the road. A small white donkey with a coloured saddle stood meekly at a corner, his master, huddled up inside a flowing robe, asleep. Straight from these humble forms one's eye travelled upwards to the vast lineaments and crowding guns and turrets of a French ship of battle. The turquoise water lay about it like a sheet of silk. Every detail of the life on board it was visible to us from here. Following it in a line were other ships of war—monitors from the Flemish coast, with long and threatening guns for land bombardment. These were the heavy artillery of the troops across the water. A hospital-ship, white and green, and of stately beauty, came

slowly up the ways with its tragic freight.

The ruffled hills of the desert, which at noon are scarce visible in the glare, rose up before our eyes across the tawny sands, a marvel of red and purple, with the lustre of silk that has been crumpled.

The day was passing, and upon the instant the full-orbed moon rose over the sand-hills like patterned gold, sending her quiver of light upon the waters where sea and desert meet at the doorways of the Canal.

"Like a play," said one; but in truth it was the universe we were looking on, moving upon its ordered course.

The War and its incidents fell away from me. My soul was lost in the magical perspective, uplifted into the great plan and divine harmony of creation. The words of Job, that Arab *sheikh* who lived upon these fringes, came back to me from those dim ages when man, though still in his beginnings, plumbed the very seas of life:—

"He stretcheth out the North .
Over the empty place,
And hangeth the Earth upon Nothing.
He hath compassed the Waters with
bounds,
Until the day and night come to an
end.
The Pillars of Heaven tremble
And are astonished at his Rebuke.
He divideth the Sea with his power,
And by his Spirit he garnisheth the
Heavens.
Lo, these are but the outskirts of his
ways;
But how small a whisper do we hear of
him?
The thunder of his power
Who can understand?"

ODYSSEUS.

REMINISCENCES OF THE KABUL CAMPAIGN, 1879-80.

BY THE RIGHT HON. SIR H. MORTIMER DURAND,
G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

IN the last chapter of my Kabul reminiscences I left the British force under General Roberts established on the Siah Sung heights, and in possession of Kabul. The Amir had abdicated on the 12th October, and the control of the country had been practically taken over by the General. There had been a great explosion in the Bala Hissar or Citadel, and it had been decided that the whole force should be kept together for the winter in the Sherpur Cantonment outside the city.

During the remainder of October nothing of note occurred, though it was always a wonder to me that the explosion of the 16th was not followed by others extending to the whole of the powder and stores in the Bala Hissar, which would probably have destroyed the city. The several magazines were ranged round the walls of the upper Citadel, and those which went were only about seventy yards from the main one, with open ground between. Yet, though this and the rest were very poor buildings, and were exposed to a shower of burning beams, fragments of shell, and other missiles, they somehow escaped. On the 19th I rode over to make a plan of the British Residency, and my diary has the following entry: "Before

taking my plan in the morning I went up to the Citadel and examined the scene of the explosion. It was a curious sight. Huge cavities in the ground showed roughly where the magazines had been. In them were lying a few dead mules and camels, and the ground was thickly strewn with bullets, mostly spherical, and other ammunition." Some of the other ammunition consisted of Snider cartridges, one or two of which I saw explode with a little pop, the bullets jumping out a few inches. I went to look at one magazine, the farthest from those which had gone on the 16th, and found the wooden doors marked all over with burns and bullet marks. One or two other doors had been blown off altogether. My diary goes on: "Some sappers were beginning to remove powder from the magazine when I came up. It was stored in large earthen jars, holding, I am told, about 350 lb. each. They cannot stand alone, being pointed at the base, and must have been put in position before filling. Removing the powder is no easy matter in consequence. The total quantity remaining is stated by the engineers at a million pounds, or about 450 tons.¹ Directly after I left, while I was in the

¹ It was, I believe, found to be less—about 250.

Residency, small quantities of powder began jumping again at the other end, and the officer in charge sent a man to me to ask for bheestees (water-carriers), whom I got."

The Oriental, with his belief in Kismet (fate), is a wonderful person at times. Anything more mad than those magazine sheds with their unprotected jars of powder can hardly be imagined. The mouths of the jars had not even a rag or sheet of paper over them. I have no doubt every Afghan soldier in the garrison of the Citadel smoked his "Kalian," and lit a fire of logs when and where he chose. Yet nothing happened till we came and began to take proper precautions.

I got my plan of the Residency, not perhaps a very exact one, as I had to pace the distances, but practically accurate; and I was glad to have it, because the Residency was just under the magazines and might have been destroyed at any time. As it was, I found a chimney on Cavagnari's quarters had been knocked down by the first explosion, and bullets and stones and beams of wood were lying in all directions. If I had not been there the day before the explosion, I should have got a wrong idea of the place as it was at the time of the massacre. I have the plan and description still.

Meanwhile things were not going too well all round us. The line by which we had

advanced through the mountains from India was cut behind us by tribal risings, and in Afghanistan itself there was no real Government. General James Hills¹ had been made Governor of the city, but we had no hold over the country outside. "The Ameer," I wrote in my diary, "is a little more cheerful, but utterly refuses to sign a letter or give an order as Ameer. 'Anything you please as plain Yakub Khan,' he says, 'but nothing as Hákim [ruler] again.'" His chief Ministers were in disgrace, and could not help us in the important work of collecting supplies, of which we had only ten days' in store. As snow had begun to fall on the neighbouring hills, and the winter was evidently approaching, this was serious. We had some vegetables and plenty of fruit. A donkey-load of grapes could be bought for a rupee. One would see three or four men upset the panniers on the ground and sit round the heap eating till they were surfeited. But an army cannot live on fruit alone, and neither meat nor grain nor fodder could easily be got. Going into the General's room one day I found him discussing the matter with the chief commissariat officer, Colonel Badcock, a very capable man, with a pleasant rather cynical way of speech. His most efficient helper was an Afghan General, Saif ud din, The Sword of the Faith, who was bringing in

¹ Now Lieut.-General Sir James Hills Johnes, V.C., G.C.B.

considerable numbers of sheep. He was a rascal, and General Roberts wanted to try him for a serious offence. Badcock closed the discussion by saying: "Well, General, you must do as you please, but you have got to choose between Saif ud din and mutton." The General laughed and chose mutton. Meanwhile the Afghan Commander-in-Chief, Daud Shah, used to come to us constantly with warnings that the tribes were in a state of ferment, and that our small foraging parties might at any moment get into trouble. He said, according to my diary, that "the hillsides and villages are full of armed men, soldiers who opposed us at Char Asiab, . . . and are game for anything. . . . And he is confident that unless amnestied or otherwise dispersed, they will give us serious trouble in the winter." He pointed out—what has so often been pointed out in similar circumstances—that no one knew whether we were going to stay in the country permanently, so that men were afraid to serve us. Daud Shah was a very tall man, with, I think, a touch of negro blood, and a great reputation for courage. He would come and sit in our tents, wrapped in a long coat of costly fur, and drink endless cups of commissariat tea, which was horrid, and talk, pleasantly enough, by the hour. He had been wounded in an attempt to control the mutineers who attacked our Mission; but he was distrusted. The general

opinion in camp was that he was trying to frighten us and prevent our collecting supplies.

As to the more distant provinces, we knew little or nothing. We seemed to be surrounded by a wall of darkness which we could not penetrate. It was an anxious time for the General in command and for the Indian Government, upon whom lay the burden of finding a policy for the future.

I had published earlier in this year a history of the First Afghan War, written by my father, and the state of things there described was curiously like that now prevailing. Lord Roberts afterwards gave me his copy of the book. He had written on the fly-leaf: "I had this copy of the 'First Afghan War' with me in Afghanistan during the Second Afghan War. I read it with the deepest interest, and never referred to it without gaining valuable information."

At the end of the month we moved down from the camp on the Siah Sung heights to the walled cantonment in Sherpur. I had ridden over a few days earlier to see the place and my own quarters. My diary says: "I am to live for the winter in a little downstairs room in a gateway, which was used as a mule stable. However, by opening out windows and digging up the floor and whitewashing, it will be made nice enough no doubt." The sappers did in fact make it a very snug little room, where I spent

many hard-worked but happy hours in warmth and comfort. The gateway was our Headquarters, the General's rooms being just to one side of it, in the inner wall of the cantonment. When we first moved down our quarters were not ready, and for a time we remained in tents. The cold had then become very keen at night; and in our little mess tent, though the floor was sunk three feet below the ground level and there was a mud fireplace, the grapes on the table used to be lumps of ice, and I remember Colonel Galbraith¹ of the Staff coming in one evening with a bottle of medicine which had frozen solid while he was walking over from the dispensary.

During the month of November the collection of supplies went on, under considerable difficulties, and the General himself made some visits of inspection to neighbouring points. As our line of communication by the central or Kurram route was now closed, an attempt was being made to open up the northern and more direct route to India by the famous Khyber Pass. Early in November we rode some distance down this line, which passes through some difficult country. I found that our light-weight General was a rather uncomfortable man to ride behind in a cavalcade. His favourite mount was a little thin roan mare which had a peculiar pace of its own, keeping one always out of a

walk and never in a trot. And when he pushed on he went very fast, so that the dust rose in blinding clouds from the dry ground, and those behind had to gallop along trusting in Providence and their horses. But it was all enjoyable and deeply interesting. On the 3rd we rode through two passes, one being the Khurd Kabul, where our people suffered so terribly in the retreat of 1842, "and," I note in my diary, "a rough day's work we had of it. The distance was thirty-two miles, and the road lay almost all the way along the bed of the stream, which we constantly crossed and recrossed, our horses floundering among the boulders and water-holes. In every shady corner the stream was already well coated with ice. In many places the rocks rose precipitously on either side, and scarcely gave room for a horse to turn between them. One could well understand the destruction of our people in '42. To plunge into these rugged defiles without previously turning and clearing or holding the heights was to ensure the most murderous disaster. A few score of matchlock men among the rocks firing quietly down into the blocked mass below must do fearful execution.

"I could not help thinking at every such spot of the poor English ladies—many in sore sorrow for the loss of husband or brother—many perhaps great with child—riding through the ice and snow and the shower of Afghan bullets.

¹ Afterwards Adjutant-General in India.

... Changing horses at Butkhak, ... we cantered back to cantonments. We had been eight hours in the saddle over a very rough forty-eight miles, and I had had about enough of it.

"By the way, those Kataghan horses are wonderful stuff. Daud is a huge fellow—full six feet three, and broad in proportion—and he rode a cob of his throughout. ... It was as fresh as paint on reaching cantonments. ... Daud must ride full 16 stone."

Some other pleasant rides on duty followed, during one of which I note that as we returned across the open plain at the back of the cantonment we saw "the 9th Lancers and our sporting *Padré* Adams playing polo." This and other sports had been started by those who had time for them.

Later I wrote: "Our polo ground is the finest I have seen. The broad smooth plain with the blue waters of the lake to the north, and beyond them the rugged nearer range, and beyond it again the long white line of the Hindu Kush, form a beautiful picture—all lying under a cloudless sky."

On the 21st November General Baker was sent out with a small force of all arms to support an Afghan Sardar who was collecting forage for us in the Maidan district, some five-and-twenty miles from Kabul. Baker was also to strike at any armed bodies which might come within reach. The reports of hostile gatherings were becoming more circumstantial and frequent—in par-

ticular the report that a famous mulla or priest, Mushk i Alam, the scent of the world, who had been active against us forty years before, was raising men on all sides for a Holy War. On the 22nd General Roberts followed, taking with him MacGregor and myself. "Our first day's march ended at Upper Urgundeh ... where we found our camp pitched. The views on the road were pretty, and in parts very fine. The Chardeh valley is pleasing in itself—and when you get near Urgundeh the look back across the hill-slopes and blue higher ranges, to the grand white line of the Hindu Kush, was beautiful in the extreme. Urgundeh was bitterly cold—a keen wind blowing—and everything frozen hard."

I remember that night well. MacGregor and I were sharing a small tent, and in spite of all we could do the wind kept getting in under the canvas. We had brought no camp-beds with us, and though we had blankets and sheepskin coats, with waterproof sheets to lie on, the icy draught along the ground was very trying. At last I dropped off to sleep, but woke at daybreak to find that MacGregor, the dour MacGregor, had spread his blanket over me, and was lying in his long posteen without one. And he was extremely angry and rude when I objected.

We got back to Sherpur on the 25th November. On the following day I exchanged my cold wind-blown tent for my new quarters, "and right pleas-

ant the change is to a warm room with a roaring fire. It doubles the length of your day, to begin with—which is no small boon—for writing in tents was becoming impossible after sundown. And it gives space, which is also a boon." Our tents were small—seven foot square—so that there was not much more than space for a bed and a rickety camp table; but the real drawback for a man who had much writing work to do was that in spite of postteens and periodical jorums of hot cocoa, one got numbed with cold, while the ink was constantly freezing, and having to be sent out to the camp fire to thaw. My mule stable was the height of luxury in comparison.

Another great advantage was that one could bathe in comfort. Till then my only bath had been a hole in the ground behind my tent, lined with a waterproof sheet. And this was not very private. I tried to make it so by getting two servants to stand facing outwards holding up horse-blankets, but one day I looked up to find the grinning faces of two aides-de-camp peering over the top.

Throughout November the rumours of hostile gatherings increased. I noted that "Daud Shah still believes in the probability of a concerted movement against us," and from the 1st December, when the fallen Amir started on his march to India, the rumours came in thicker and faster every day. His deportation seemed to be the signal for

the fiery cross to go round among the Afghan clans; and on the 8th our troops marched out of the cantonment to break up a gathering which was said to have come together sixteen miles away at Urgundeh, where it was to be joined by another body of tribesmen coming from the northern district of Kohistan.

That morning there had been a review of the British force on the plain behind the cantonment, and as I rode over the gap in the Bemaru hills, and looked down at the little serried line of troops, it struck me that any Afghan who saw them must think how few were the Infidels who had seized Kabul. They were beautiful troops, but they looked lost in that broad plain.

The plan for dealing with the Urgundeh gathering was that General Macpherson, with one brigade, should push forward to the north of the gathering and drive off the Kohistan men, while General Baker, marching round by the south, was to approach Urgundeh from that direction. Then Macpherson was to turn towards him, and the gathering was to be crushed between the two British forces. Meanwhile General Massy, with a few squadrons of cavalry and four horse-artillery guns, was to move into the Chardeh valley, lying between our cantonment and Urgundeh, and co-operate with Macpherson from that side.

The operation began successfully enough. Macpherson thrust his force in between

Urgundeh and the Kohistan men, and on the 10th December he defeated the latter with loss. It was hoped that on the following day he and Baker would make their combined advance.

About 10 o'clock on the morning of the 11th, General Roberts rode out of the cantonment with his Staff and a small escort, and, crossing the low range of hills to the west of the cantonment, entered the Chardeh valley. His intention was to join Macpherson and watch the combined movement. None of us expected to see much fighting, for we had ridden out the afternoon before, towards the sound of Macpherson's guns, and had seen nothing. On the off-chance I went with the party, but as I was riding through the Headquarters gateway, our well-known war correspondent, Howard Hensman of 'The Pioneer,' the keenest of the keen, chaffed me for going. By that time I had found my heavy pistol and sword were tiresome on horseback, and had taken to carrying only a light Indian "tul-war," which I thought quite enough for a non-combatant.

Hensman, by the way, was a remarkable man. Full of energy and varied information, and thoroughly trustworthy, he had established himself as one of the institutions of India. One could tell him anything, with perfect certainty that if it was told in confidence it would not be published. He played cricket, too, and mixed in all the sports of the younger

men; and his health seemed to be proof against anything. He would sit at whist half the night, then write till day-break, and turn out to breakfast with clear eyes and an innocent childlike colour. But when I last saw him a few years ago he was the shadow of his old self, and now he too has gone.

We rode over the range, and then I had the chance of seeing what I had often wished to see — a cavalry charge. To quote my diary: "After going a mile or two to the westward, we suddenly saw the smoke and heard the sound of guns on our left front, and riding up to the spot found Massy trying to check a large force of the enemy which was advancing from the cover of some villages near the foot of the hills. Avoiding, either by design or by accident, the snare set for them, they had retired from Macpherson in a south-easterly direction instead of south-west, and were rather between him and Kabul than between him and Maidan."

I was riding that morning with our soldier *Padré*, Adams, who had become since we took Kabul my most constant companion, and I turned to him with the remark that I hoped we should see some fun at last. To my surprise I saw him looking grave, and his answer was, "I hope we shan't see more than we care about." Till then our only anxiety had been to get the Afghans to stand, and it had never occurred to me that our people

would have the smallest difficulty in scattering those before us. Adams, who was a born soldier and had more experience of the Afghans, knew better. To quote my diary again:—

“The enemy came on well in heavy masses, covered by a fairly regular line of skirmishers about two miles in length, the red and white standards of their Mullas dotting the line in front, and a few horsemen showing on their rear and flanks. They had no guns, but were obviously well supplied with rifles, for even at eight hundred yards—their distance when we came up—there was a ceaseless singing of bullets over our heads. The accurate fire of the guns had no effect upon them. Seeing that we had no infantry, they poured steadily forwards without a check or pause, shouting and firing. It is rather a Homeric simile, but their numbers were so great that there was a continuous roar like the distant sound of the sea. According to MacGregor, they could not have been less than 10,000.”

I then found myself close to MacGregor, who, having been shot at, was now at his best, all his rough temper gone and his eyes bright with happiness. Sitting on his big horse in rear of our guns, which were limbering up to retire, he told me the cavalry were going in, and that I was to stay with him. Immediately afterwards two hundred of the 9th Lancers and a troop of the 14th Jâts went forward. “It was an exciting moment. I saw

them wheel into line, break into a trot, and disappear in a cloud of dust. A few moments of anxiety followed, and then I saw what I hope I may never see again.” The charge had failed; our men, English and Indian, had galloped over very broken ground straight at and into the enemy's line, but they had been unable to make any impression. The Colonel of the 9th, Cleland, had been dangerously wounded, other officers and men of his splendid regiment had been killed or disabled, and many had lost their horses. The Jâts, under Captain Philip Neville, had also suffered some loss. The first thing I saw was an officer's charger, which came galloping out of the smoke and dust with his reins dragging. Some of us tried to catch him, but he kicked and swerved and got away. Then came the mauled squadrons. They had done their best, but the odds were too great. A couple of hundred troopers, however brave, cannot hope to ride over ten thousand men—even undisciplined Afghans—if the latter mean fighting. And in the broken ground, amid ditches and terraces and mud walls, the Afghans fought fiercely.

Soon afterwards the guns, forced to retire across cultivated fields, stuck fast in some water cuts, and in spite of a second charge by the cavalry they had to be abandoned.

My diary goes on: “Thinking even a civilian might be of use in such a business, I stayed behind with MacGregor,” who

wanted to hold one of the village forts and check the farther advance of the enemy, now coming on very fast; but we found the fort closed against us, "and the villagers gave us a volley at about thirty yards to increase the excitement," so this plan had to be given up. "After this we retired steadily, trying in vain to find the General. . . . Our first line was on the city, by the Deh Mazang pass, but thinking the 72nd would be coming up to our support from cantonments by the Khirskhana (another pass through the hills), MacGregor changed his line in that direction."

As we rode towards this pass we saw drawn up across it on the skyline some forty mounted men, and were for some moments in doubt whether they were friends or enemies, but with the help of MacGregor's glass we saw that a few of them had lances, which was a relief. Riding on we found, according to my diary, that "Joey Deane¹ had stopped and drawn up" these men, among them being some artillerymen from the lost guns, a few cavalry troopers, and a friendly Afghan Sardar, Hashim Khan, with five or six followers. Here we waited some time. "We were not molested, the enemy streaming by in great numbers, with drums beating and flags waving, towards Deh Mazang. After an hour or so we saw on our right front the head of Macpherson's baggage making

for cantonments, and it then occurred to MacGregor that we might collect a few men of the baggage guard and try to work round into the enemy's rear and retake the guns if not strongly guarded. We accordingly moved forward, and picking up seventy men or so of the Goorkhas, 67th, and 3rd Sikhs, advanced across country by our left. Hashim Khan with some sowars joined us, and after a time we found the guns, fortunately unguarded. None had been dragged far. They were sent in to camp. MacGregor then made for Deh Mazang to join the General, who had checked the enemy in the gorge with the 72nd, and induced them to sheer off still farther to their right behind the Bala Hissar hill. I remained with the party of infantry which had no officer, and did not reach cantonments till nine o'clock, having overtaken Massy and gone round with him *via* Deh Mazang."

On arrival I found that I was "exceedingly hungry and rather tired," having been in the saddle about eleven hours, and that I was also suffering from a curious injury—self-inflicted. In the course of the retreat I had been obliged to draw my sword, which, being an Indian tulwar, was very small in the grip. There were lumps at the ends of the short crossguard, and, holding the weapon tight, I had managed to bruise myself so severely between the finger and thumb that for some days

¹ Afterwards Colonel T. Deane, C.B.

afterwards I could hardly write. It was perhaps a fitting punishment for not sticking to my own weapon, the pen. But General Roberts was afterwards good enough to recommend me for the war medal, on the ground that I had shown "conspicuous gallantry" on this day, and I have always treasured the medal and the slip of paper that got it for me more than any other decoration.

Adams was awarded the Victoria Cross, being, I believe, the first clergyman to win this priceless honour. He won it by saving two troopers of the 9th Lancers, who had fallen with their horses into a deep irrigation channel with almost perpendicular sides, and would certainly have been killed. No one but a man of great physical strength and activity could have dragged them out, and it was an act of devoted courage to try, for the foremost of the pursuing Afghans were almost within arm's length. Adams had lost his horse just before, in helping another man, and had to get away on foot, supporting one of the troopers, who was hurt.

At first sight one would not have thought that Adams was a very powerful man. He was not tall, nor particularly broad. But he was beautifully built, with a chest like a drum, and lean, muscular limbs. His clean-shaved face, though it could light up with a winning smile, was strong and resolute. He was always in hard condition, in spite of occasional

attacks of fever, brought on largely by his persistent habit of standing bareheaded under an Eastern sun when holding any religious service. After seeing him prostrated two or three times, I tried to reason with him about this, but where he thought his duty was concerned one might as well have tried to reason with a stone wall.

He was not an eloquent preacher; but what he said was so modest, and withal so full of practical knowledge, that it was always worth hearing. The men loved him, for while he could probably have thrashed any one of them, they knew he would do anything on earth for them, as gently as a woman, if they were in trouble.

For some time before the Chardeh fight, Adams and I had been in the habit of taking a run of two or three miles every morning before breakfast. There I felt at home with him. But I did not feel so much at home when he took me out on horseback, as he was fond of doing, to look for paper-chase courses. I had got rid of my man-eater, whose character had become so well known that he sold at auction for five rupees—something under ten shillings. I had secured in his place a fairly good waler, hardly up to my weight but pleasant to ride, and reasonably willing to take the mud walls and water-courses about Kabul. Adams had a well-bred grey mare, which jumped beautifully. With his moderate weight and

excellent seat and hands he could get her over anything; but what he wanted was a series of jumps which were within the compass of the average horse and horseman; so when in doubt he used to make the experiment with me. This sometimes had disastrous results. I have a vivid recollection of one place where he put his mare over a ditch and mud wall into a broad road or track, and then over a second jump into a field on the other side, from which he turned to watch me follow. We got there, my horse and I, but on our heads and apart. The ground was soft, and no harm was done, but the Padré's face of mingled concern and amusement as I picked myself up comes back to me now as if it had all happened yesterday.

Five years later, after his return to India, Adams was in camp with my old chief, Alfred Lyall, then Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces. One night an elephant "went wild," and Lyall described what followed in these words: "There was a great fight in the dark; the wild elephant charged the tents; Parson Adams held a great lamp steady as a rock while Greig of the Forests fired at the beast's forehead and turned him just as he came within the lamp's flash, a few yards off—rather a neat display of nerve on both sides. . . . He was going straight for the lamp."

Dear Padré. I saw him once or twice in England when he had settled down as a country

vicar; but, alas! he has gone too.

The action of the 11th December was the prelude to three days' fighting on the range of hills above Kabul, during which General Roberts attacked and at times heavily punished the gathering clans. From the top of the Headquarters gateway we could watch the varying fortune of the struggles for peak after peak, and intensely exciting it all was. Not seldom the combatants were so close to us that we could follow with the naked eye the details of assault and counter-assault. As a rule the enemy gave ground before our attacks, but their numbers seemed to increase hour by hour; and when the darkness began to gather and fighting ceased, we could see, night after night, fresh bodies of tribesmen streaming down from the north to join the holy war. On the skyline of the near hills they loomed huge and ghostly in the twilight, like a moving wood. At last the General—a fighting general if ever there was one—had to recognise that the odds against us were too great, and on the 14th, with deep reluctance, he issued orders for a retirement. That afternoon the town and Citadel were given up, and the whole force concentrated in the cantonment, with something like a hundred thousand Afghans round it. During the night the telegraph line to India was cut, and not only were we fairly on the defensive, but no news of us could reach

the outer world except by heliograph, when the sun came out at times from the grey snow-clouds which had gathered about us.

For a week or so after that, the little force which had taken Kabul was more or less besieged. As I have written elsewhere,¹ "the cantonment had been surrounded by the enemy except on the northern side, where the level plain afforded no shelter. Behind the crumbling mud walls and broken forts, which in our confidence we had left standing, in pits and ditches, under every sort of cover, the Afghan marksmen lay and watched. Soon after daybreak they opened a desultory fire, and this was kept up all day long. Farther away the rude banners of the insurgents fluttered on the hill-tops, and at times bodies of men could be seen moving about them and waving their swords."

The situation as it struck me is described in this entry from my diary:—

"It is very humiliating altogether, and very ludicrous after all our self-satisfaction and swagger, to find ourselves so easily thrown behind entrenchments. . . . The country is wholly gone, and cannot be recovered this winter, if at all. We should, however, be able to shake ourselves free and recover the city by Christmas. . . . Our position, though not one I believe of serious danger, has been more or less troublesome. Bullets drop

about cantonment all day, and men are hit occasionally. Our gateway, being known as the General's quarters, is specially saluted, and though I think most of the enemy's missiles are slugs and bits of telegraph wire, the sharp, prolonged ping of the conical bullet is common enough. You cannot walk across cantonment without seeing a dozen whip up the dust.

"Our loss during the last ten days have (*sic*) been sensible—over 200 men *hors de combat*, and about 10 officers killed—some fine fellows among them—notably Cook² of the Goorkhas and Butson of the 9th Lancers. The latter was much loved by his men. He fell in a charge on the 13th, his last words being 'Now, boys, for the honour of the old Ninth.' . . .

"The immortal Tommy Atkins says it's the first time he ever heard of a blooming General being 'confined to barracks'—which has germs of wit."

So matters went on for several days. The force was not closely shut up. Parties of troops moved out at times, and the plain to the north was always open to our cavalry. The enemy had no guns, and against any attack of tribesmen we had strong defences. The supply of food and ammunition was not alarmingly small, and the clans were not likely to hold together very long. So we were confident enough. Our officers took it all as if it were a big picnic.

¹ 'Helen Treveryan.'

² Major Cook, V.C.

The cold at night was trying for the troops lying out on the hillside, who sometimes woke up covered with snow; but the British soldier was as happy as possible, and so were his native comrades. Sing-songs and athletic meetings went on as if there was not an enemy within miles, and once some "friendly" Afghan notables were snowballed, which greatly injured their dignity. Our people all felt sure they would get their revenge before long, and were content to wait.

On the 23rd December the "siege" came to an end. We had been warned by spies the night before that there was to be a grand attack upon us at daybreak, as General Charles Gough was coming up with an extra brigade and was not far off. But we had had so many false alarms, that though all arrangements were made to meet an attack, many of us were sceptical. My diary of the 23rd has the following entry:—

"Nothing particular yesterday. Desultory sniping all day, but no harm done.

"To-day we have had some work. About 6 A.M. a light flared up on the Asamai Hill, and our right and left were simultaneously attacked, though with no great spirit. I woke at the sound of musketry from our gateway, and turned out rather reluctantly by candle-light. Then a tremendous roll of musketry began in the Bemaru direction,

and went on for some minutes. After a time, when it grew light, I went off with Hastings and Ramsay¹ to the Bemaru hills to watch the fighting, and there we remained till ten o'clock—by Hugh Gough's picket. The enemy were in considerable numbers, but scattered in parties of two or three hundred, and made no attempt at a combined advance. The fire, however, was very heavy, particularly from a low line of wall at the northern foot of the hill. Gough was hit just before our arrival by a spent shot which tore through the breast of his posteeen and knocked him down. Shortly afterwards I got a smart rap on the arm from a spent Enfield bullet. . . . At ten we returned to breakfast, the firing being then continuous all round—particularly about the 72nd gate, which was heavily peppered throughout the day. . . . About one o'clock, the cavalry having gone up to the gorge, we sallied out again, and remained all the afternoon on the Western Hill watching the progress of the fight."

Brigadier-General Hugh Gough,² who was in command of a part of our defences towards the left and rear, was a distinguished cavalry officer. Both he and his brother Charles, who commanded the reinforcing column, had already won the Victoria Cross. Hugh Gough I knew, and liked much. His sturdy sun-beaten

¹ Now Colonel Henry Ramsay, one of our Political Officers.

² Afterwards General Sir Hugh Gough, V.C., G.C.B.

face was an index of the bulldog courage of his nature. Both brothers are now gone, but not without adding to the honour of their fighting family.

My "rap on the arm" was curious. I was sitting on a boulder talking to Colonel Hanna of the Quartermaster-General's Department, with my hands over my knees, when I was startled by a sharp blow on the forearm, as if from a stick, and a bullet fell from the sleeve of my posteeen, which it had not penetrated. I picked it up, and found its nose was rubbed off on one side. We were sitting below the crest of the hill, out of fire, but it had evidently struck the northern face of the hill, and found me by a high ricochet—a rather wicked trick. After describing the afternoon's fighting, which ended in the repulse and retirement of the Afghans, my diary goes on: "Some behaved very well to-day. By the southwest bastion in particular, and in the Shah Bagh, they held their ground most pertinaciously. . . . And on the Bemaru side one poor devil who was hard hit and unable to move, lay in the middle of a field steadily firing until at last polished off by a volley. I saw another on the Siah Sung gorge hold his own against four men—sowars of the 5th—doubling and dodging for full two minutes. At last they got him. Hammond of the 5th killed a moolla, imagining from his horse and sword that he was a fighting man. He found a large Koran in his clothes.

"Gough has just reported—11 P.M.—that he has crossed the Logar, and will advance by the eastern end of the Siah Sung at six to-morrow morning. I fancy we shall have some more fighting before all is over. They ought to attack him to-night. With his small force and no entrenchments a rush of 10,000 men ought to succeed."

But Gough was not attacked. The enemy had had enough, and on the morning of the 24th it was found that their great host had melted away in the darkness like an army of spectres. On Christmas Day I wrote: "Gough marched in yesterday. During the afternoon snow fell, and much impeded the action of the cavalry, who had been sent out in pursuit of the enemy. They saw no one." So ended the tribal rising which had driven us behind our walls, and had seemed to threaten the destruction of our force.

Compared with the gigantic warfare of to-day, it all seems, and was, a series of skirmishes; but the loss of another British force in Kabul might have had grave results in India.

For a month afterwards our work was very heavy. Not only was there much despatch-writing to be done, but arrangements had to be made for regaining some hold on the provinces, where various pretenders were "out," and anarchy was complete. My diary speaks of whole nights spent in work; and often when I had received my orders, about ten o'clock, I left the General

sitting down himself to hours of toil. He had a writing-table in his bedroom, with a strong reflecting lantern, and no day was too long or tiring to keep him from his papers at night if there was anything to be done.

But so far as I was concerned the work was nearly at an end, for on the 25th January I received information that if General Roberts agreed I was to be appointed Under-Secretary in the Indian Foreign Office, and to join almost at once. No one could have been kinder and more considerate than the General during our recent time of trouble, and I felt very reluctant to leave him,—specially as he had shown me a few days before a letter asking that I might not be taken away so long as I could be spared. But the Under-Secretaryship was the blue ribbon of the junior Civil Service, and as it could not be kept open he advised me to accept. "You must not lose it on any account," he said. So I telegraphed accepting.

When I had finished up all outstanding work I spent my last afternoon with *Padré Adams* riding over the ground of the *Chardeh* fight. Coming back I made him show me the exact spot where he had rescued the fallen troopers of the 9th. As we were talking over this, the little chestnut polo pony on which he had mounted me suddenly reared and gave me an unpleasant fall—not the first which I owed to his master.

But that afternoon was very enjoyable, and stamped upon my memory the details of what was perhaps the most stirring scene of my life—the desperate charge of the Lancers to save our guns.

On the 1st February I said good-bye to the General in his room by the gateway and set out for India. It was a rough ride of two hundred miles to the frontier, and the start was not promising. *Henry Ramsay* had kindly arranged to accompany me for the first few miles, and as we rode out of the cantonment a heavy snowstorm came on, with the wind in our teeth. After we parted I pushed on rapidly, and then a troublesome incident occurred. I had put into one of my saddle-bags a sack of five hundred rupees for my expenses, and as I was cantering over a bit of rocky ground I heard the chink of coin below me. Looking down I found that the coarse sack had burst, and that the money had almost all gone through a hole in the corner of my worn saddle-bag. Not liking to go on without any money, I turned back upon my tracks in the snow, and, strange to say, recovered almost the whole of it. But this made me late, and it was dark before I reached my first halting-place, *Lataband*. The snow had turned to rain, and I was very wet, so although hospitably received by *Colonel Frank Norman*,¹ who was in command, I passed a wretched, sleepless night, the

¹ Afterwards Major-General Sir Frank Norman, K.C.B.

rain pouring incessantly on my tent and soaking the ground under me.

The next day I had to reach Jagdalak by the Lataband Pass; and as we had a hard march before us, my baggage and servants went on ahead, leaving me to follow after breakfast with two troopers of the Jât Horse as escort. By that time the snow had come on again, and at the top of the pass it was lying deep. There I had an amusing scare.

My man, Kulloo, had returned to India some time before, and I had taken in his place a Hindu "bearer," Gurdial, who had been with the Mission when the massacre took place, but had been hidden and saved by a friendly Afghan. He was a pitiable being when he came to me, his spirit broken by the terror he had endured, and his brain and body always numb with the cold. This day at Lataband he had gone on with the baggage, mounted on my pony.

As I got round a corner, not far from the crest of the pass, I caught a momentary glimpse of a man with something in his hand, who sank into the snow as we came in sight. The sowars behind me had seen nothing, but I felt sure my eyes had not deceived me, and feared that some of the tribesmen might have prepared an ambush for us. My diary says: "We moved slowly forward, pistols and carbines ready, and as we came nearer and nearer the excitement of waiting for the shot

became intense. It ended in my riding on to the top of the wretched Gurdial; and the absurdity of the thing, despite his misery, sent me into a roar of unsympathetic laughter." He was "weeping bitterly. The stupid fellow had let his pony go on ahead of him and failed to catch up the party. He was struggling along on foot with my claymore and sank in the snow as we came in sight."

Poor Gurdial! His sorrows that day were not over; for in the afternoon, when we were seven or eight miles from Jagdalak, "a heavy storm came on, with intense cold, and a wind which the baggage animals would not face. We crawled on a few yards at a time between the gusts. Then night came on," and, to make a long story short, we lost our way in a deep ravine with an ice-bound stream at the bottom into which we floundered. Out of this ravine there seemed to be no road, and the snow-covered hillsides were too steep for the baggage animals or for riding; so, leading our horses, the sowars and I scrambled up on foot in various directions, hoping to see the lights of the post. Again and again we returned unsuccessful to our starting-point, which we afterwards found was not 300 yards from home. Finally we hit off a narrow gully or shoot full of snow and empty tins. This was a sure sign; and eventually we got up, quite exhausted, into the back of the post, being challenged and very

nearly fired upon as hostile tribesmen. Never shall I forget the joy of getting into the warm mess-hut of that fine regiment, the 45th Sikhs. But meanwhile the servants and baggage had moved on, and we could not find them. They spent the whole night in the hills, and two of them were frost-bitten. Early in the morning they came in; but I was out searching for them, and, not knowing where I was, all but Gurdial very pluckily marched on to the next post, ten miles off, where at last I found them, to my immense relief.

The next day's march was again trying—"more intensely cold than anything I ever experienced, a bitter north wind chilling one to the bones through a heavy posteen, and swirling the frozen snow round us in blinding showers." But the cold was our safety, for it kept the tribesmen under shelter. A little later they shot several of our people on this road.

That afternoon, at a lonely spot on lower ground, I met my friend West Ridgeway,¹ who was riding up to Kabul to take my place with General Roberts; and soon after dark I was in Gandamak, where our treaty of peace had been signed the year before. There it was still cold, but on the following day we came upon low ground, "with the crops springing up and the fly-catchers fluttering in the air.

The change from the dreary discomfort of the high ground to this Indian scenery and climate struck me as very delightful."

After this it was all plain sailing. Jagdalak and other points on the road had brought bitter memories of the disastrous retreat in 1842, and at Jellalabad I saw the place where Brydon came riding in alone to announce the destruction of our unhappy force. It was something to remember that there at least we beat off the triumphant enemy, and in some measure redeemed the honour of our arms.

At Jellalabad I left my horses and baggage animals, which were worn out, to come on quietly to India, pushing on myself in a native ekka or cart with a light kit. At a place called Basawal I found camped by the roadside the headquarters of the Central India Horse, of which my brother² was then Adjutant. Inquiring for his tent, I found him at the doorway, writing at a camp table. We had not met for three years, and I had grown a heavy beard during the winter; so he did not know me. I stayed with him an hour or so, and was glad to see how well his newly-joined regiment looked. The cavalry regiments on the line higher up had been almost destroyed by hard work and exposure—a lesson to me as to the wear and tear of a

¹ The Right Hon. Sir West Ridgeway, G.C.B., &c.

² Now Colonel Algernon Durand, C.B., C.I.E.

campaign. Then he mounted me, and rode with me to Dacca.

On the 8th February I rode into Peshawar, and that night was dining again with the Waterfields, feeling quite smart with a white collar on under my khaki. Five more days of travel, and on the night of the 13th, the eve of my birthday, I was once more with my wife and child.

There followed a few weeks in Calcutta, which were very interesting to me. On the 8th March my immediate chief, Alfred Lyall, started for Kabul, to look into the Afghan situation on the spot with General Roberts, leaving me in charge of the Foreign Office. Lord Lytton then asked me to go over to Government House and stay with him, as the work was very heavy and he wished to have me at hand. Though I had often met him during the last two years, I had never till then got to know him well. He was at this time much disturbed in mind by the state of affairs in Afghanistan, and the violent attacks which it had brought upon him in England. Personally I had not thought his measures right. I see in my Kabul diary of December an entry: "An unnecessary and costly war will have ended in our having less weight in Afghanistan than we had in 1878. . . . Never did two men more damage India than Lord Lytton and Colley." But now that I was in personal contact with him, I could not help

recognising his courage in adversity, or the streak of genius which ran through even the least practical of his schemes; and some of these—for example, his determination to get a firm grip on the northern and southern ends of our long frontier line at Gilgit and Quetta—turned out to be thoroughly sound. Colonel Brackenbury,¹ a very clever man, who had succeeded the brave and ill-fated Colley as his Private Secretary, explained to me much that I had not understood, and showed me that some of the charges brought against Lord Lytton and his policy were most unjust.

Lord Lytton's methods of work were peculiar, and to a hard-driven office man rather trying. On my first night with him, I had arrived in time for dinner. After dinner he kept me playing whist in the south verandah till past midnight, while the telegrams were accumulating on a little table by my side. Then he said: "Come along, Durand, let us open the telegrams," and we paced the verandah for five hours discussing the messages and drafting replies verbally. At last, to my great relief, when all was done, and I thought done very well, he went to bed. I had then to put the whole into writing, and my night's rest consisted of a bath before breakfast. I got more or less accustomed to these methods in time, but when the Calcutta season

¹ Afterwards General Sir Henry Brackenbury, G.C.B.

was over I was very short of sleep.

Before we left for Simla the result of the General Election of 1880 became known, and was a great surprise to him. For some time after the unfavourable telegrams began coming in he remained confident that later contests would turn the scale, but one evening, after going through the figures, I came to the conclusion that this was no longer possible, and brought him my calculation written down. At first he would not believe it, but the figures were decisive, and he then said that he would not serve a day under the Liberals. I tried to argue that the Viceroyalty of India ought not to depend upon the vicissitudes of party politics at home; but he would not listen to this

for a moment, and certainly it would have been very difficult for him to remain after the attacks which had been made upon him.

In any case he did not remain. Then followed the advent of Lord Ripon, and immediately afterwards the defeat at Maiwand, and the march of General Roberts from Kabul to Kandahar. I telegraphed to congratulate him on his selection for this command, and I find in my diary his telegram in reply: "Best thanks. Wish you were coming." But though I was to visit Kabul again some years later, and to see much of Lord Roberts in other circumstances, my days of service under him in Afghanistan were over. They had been a deeply interesting part of my life.

AN AIRMAN'S OUTINGS.—III.

SPYING OUT THE LAND.

FOR thirty hours the flight had "stood by" for a long reconnaissance. We were dragged from bed at 4.30 A.M., only to return gratefully beneath the blankets three-quarters of an hour later, when a slight but steady rain washed away all chance of an immediate job. The drizzle continued until after sundown, and our only occupations throughout the day were to wade from mess to aerodrome, aerodrome to mess, and overhaul in detail machines, maps, guns, and consciences. Next morning we again dressed in the half-light, and again went back to bed in the daylight. This time the show had been postponed because of low clouds and a thick ground-mist that hung over the reeking earth. It was a depressing dawn — clammy, moist, and sticky.

By early afternoon the mist had congealed, and the sheet of clouds had been torn to shreds by a strong south-west wind. The four craft detailed for the reconnaissance were therefore lined outside their shed, while their crews waited for flying orders. I was to be in the leading bus, for when C.'s death left vacant the command of A Flight, the good work of my pilot had brought him a flight commandership, a three-pipped tunic, and a sense of responsi-

bility which, to my relief, checked his tendency to over-recklessness. He now came from the squadron office with news of a changed course.

"To get the wind behind us," he explained, "we shall cross well to the south of Peronne. Next, we go to Boislens. After that we pass by Nimporte, over the Forêt de Charbon to Siègécourt; then up to Le Recul and back by Princebourg, St Guillaume, and Fleurogne.

"As regards the observers, don't forget to use your field-glasses on the rolling stock; don't forget the precise direction of trains and motor transport; don't forget the railways and roads on every side; don't forget the canals; and for the Lord's and everybody else's sake, don't be surprised by Hun aircraft. As regards the pilots — keep in close formation when possible; don't straggle and don't climb above the proper height."

The pilots ran their engines once more, and the observers exchanged information about items such as Hun aerodromes and the number of railway stations at each large town. An air reconnaissance is essentially the observer's show; its main object is to supply the "I" people at headquarters with private bulletins from the back of the German front. The collection of reconnaissance re-

ports is work of a highly skilled nature, or ought to be. Spying out the land is much more than a search of railways, roads, and the terrain generally. The experienced observer must know the Boche area over which he works rather better than he knows Salisbury Plain. The approximate position of railway junctions and stations, aerodromes, factories, and depots should be familiar to him, so that he can without difficulty spot any new features. Also he must be something of a sleuth, particularly when using smoke as a clue. In the early morning a thin layer of smoke above a wood may mean a bivouac. If it be only a mile or two behind the lines, it can evidence heavy artillery. A narrow stream of smoke near a railway will make an observer scan the line closely for a stationary train, as the Boche engine-drivers usually try to avoid detection by shutting off steam. The Huns have many other dodges to avoid publicity. When Allied aircraft appear, motor and horse transport remain immobile at the roadside or under trees. Artillery and infantry are packed under cover; though, for that matter, the enemy very rarely move troops in the daytime, preferring the night or early morning, when there are no troublesome eyes in the air. To foil these attempts at concealment is the business of the observers who gather information for Army Headquarters. For observers on corps work

the detective problems are somewhat different. This department deals with hidden saps and battery positions, and draws and photographs conclusions from clues such as a muzzle-blast, fresh tracks, or an artificial cluster of trees. All reconnaissance observers must carry out a simultaneous search of the earth for movement and the sky for foes, and in addition keep their guns ready for instant use. And should anything happen to their machines, and a forced landing seem likely, they must sit tight and carry on so long as there is the slightest hope of a safe return.

A nos moutons. I made a long list in my notebook of the places where something useful was likely to be observed, and tested my gun by firing a few shots into the ground. We hung around, impatient at the long delay.

"Get into your machines," called the Squadron Commander at last, when a telephone message had reported that the weather conditions toward the east were no longer unfavourable. We took to the air and set off. V. led his covey beyond Albert and well south of the river before he turned to the left. Then, with the strong wind behind us, we raced north-east and crossed the strip of trenches. The pilot of the emergency machine, which had come thus far to join the party if one of the other four dropped out, waved his hand in farewell and left for home.

Archie barked at us immediately, but caused small trouble, as most of his attention was already claimed by a party of French machines half a mile ahead. Anyhow we should have shaken him off quickly, for at this stage of the journey, with a forty-mile wind reinforcing our usual air speed of about ninety-five miles an hour, our ground speed was sufficient to avoid lingering in any region made unhealthy by the A.A. guns. The water-marked ribbon of trenches seemed altogether puny and absurd during the few seconds when it was within sight. The winding Somme was dull and dirty as the desolation of its surrounding basin. Some four thousand feet above the ground a few clouds moved restlessly at the bidding of the wind.

Passing a few small woods, we arrived without interruption over the railway junction of Boislens. With arms free of the machine to avoid unnecessary vibration, the observers trained their glasses on the station and estimated the amount of rolling stock. A close search of the railway arteries only revealed one train. I grabbed pencil and notebook and wrote: "Boislens, 3.5 P.M. x R.S., 1 train going S.W."

Just west of our old friend Mossy-Face were two rows of flagrantly new trenches. As this is one of the points where the enemy are now making a stand after their recent retreat, it can be assumed that even as far back as last October they were preparing new lines of

defence, Hindenburg or otherwise. Not far west of these defence works were two troublesome aerodromes at Bertincourt and Velu, both of which places have lately been captured.

A hunt for an aerodrome followed. V., who knew the neighbourhood well, having passed above it some two score times, was quick to spot a group of hitherto unnoted sheds north of Boislens, towards Mossy-Face. He circled over them to let me plot the pin-point position on the map and sketch the aerodrome and its surroundings. The Hun pilots, with thoughts of a possible bomb-raid, began to take their machines into the air for safety.

"Got 'em all?" Thus V., shouting through the rubber speaking-tube, the other end of which was fixed inside my flying-cap, so that it always rested against my ear.

"Correct. Get on with the good work."

The good work led us over a region for ever associated with British arms. Some of the towns brought bitter memories of that anxious August, three years back. Thus Nimporte, which saw a desperate but successful stand on one flank of the contemptible little army to gain time for the main body; Ventregris, scene of a cavalry charge that was a glorious tragedy; Labas, where a battery of horse-gunners made for itself an imperishable name; Siègécourt, where the British might have retired into a trap but didn't; and Le

Recul itself, whence they slipped away just in time.

In the station at Nimporte, a train was waiting to move off, and two more were on their way to the military base of Toutprès. Both attempted to hide their heads by shutting off steam immediately the drone of our engines made itself heard; but we had spotted them from afar, and already they were noted for the information of Brass Hats.

The next item of interest was activity at a factory outside a little town. Black trails of smoke stretched away from the chimneys, and surely, as we approached a minute ago, a short column of lorries was passing along a road towards the factory. Yet when we reached the spot there was no sign of road transport. Nevertheless, I was certain I had seen some motor vehicles, and I entered the fact in my notebook. Likewise I took care to locate the factory site on my map, in case it deserved the honour of a bomb-attack later.

Our bus led the way across the huge unwieldy Forêt de Charbon, patterned in rectangular fashion by intersecting roads, and we arrived at Siègécourt. This is at once a fortress and an industrial town. There are several railway stations around it, and these added greatly to the observers' collection of trains and trucks. The Boches below, with unpleasant memories of former visits from British aircraft, probably expected to be bombed. They threw up at us

a large quantity of high explosive shells, but the shots were all wide and we remained unworried. To judge by the quality of the A.A. shooting each time I called there, it seemed likely that the young Boches under instruction were allowed to cut their active service teeth on us.

Having squeezed Siègécourt of all movement, we headed for Le Recul. Here the intricate patchwork of railway kept the observers busy, and six more trains were bagged. Then, as this was the farthest point east to be touched, we turned to the left and travelled homeward.

It was soon afterwards that our engine went dud. Instead of a rhythmic and continuous hum there was at regular intervals a break, caused by one of the cylinders missing the explosion at each turn of the rotary engine. The rev.-counter showed that the number of revolutions per minute had fallen off appreciably. Decreased revs. meant less speed, and our only chance to keep with the others was to lose height continuously. We were then nearly fifty miles from the lines.

I noticed the gap in the engine's drone as soon as it began. An airman is accustomed to the full roar of his engine, and it never distracts his attention, any more than the noise of a waterfall distracts those who live near it. But if the roar becomes non-continuous and irregular he is acutely conscious of the sound.

When the machine began to lose height I knew there was a chronic miss. V. looked round and smiled reassuringly, though he himself was far from reassured. He tried an alteration in the carburettor mixture, but this did not remedy matters. Next, thinking that the engine might have been slightly choked with petrol, he cut off the supply for a moment and put down the nose of the machine. The engine stopped but picked up when the petrol supply was once more allowed to run. During the interval I thought the engine had ceased work altogether, and was about to stuff things into my pocket in readiness for a landing on hostile ground.

We continued in a westerly direction, with the one cylinder still cutting out. To make matters worse, the strong wind that had been our friend on the outward journey was now an enemy, for it was drifting us to the north, and we were obliged to steer almost dead into it to follow the set course. As we passed along the straight canal from Le Recul to Princebourg many barges were in evidence. Those at the side of the canal were taken to be moored up, and those in the middle to be moving, though the slowness of their speed made it impossible to decide on their direction, as from a height of ten thousand feet they seemed to be stationary. About a dozen Hun machines were rising from aerodromes at Passementerie, away to the

left, but if they were after us the attempt to reach our height in time was futile.

Between Le Recul and Princebourg we dropped fifteen hundred feet. The three rear machines still hovered above us. Though I was far from feeling at home, it was necessary to sweep the surrounding country for transport of all kinds. This I did almost automatically, since I found myself unable to give a whole-hearted attention to the job, while the infernal motif of the engine's ragtime drone dominated everything and invited speculation on how much lower we were than the others, and whether we were likely to reach a friendly landing-ground. And all the while a troublesome verse which had once caught my fancy chose very inopportunistically to race across the background of my mind, in time with the engine, each out-out being the end of a line. Once or twice I caught myself murmuring—

"In that poor but honest 'ome,
Where 'er sorrowin' parints live,
They drink the shampyne wine she
sends,
But never, never can fergive."

Slightly to the east of Princebourg a new complication appeared in the shape of a small German machine. Seeing that our bus was in difficulties, it awaited an opportunity to pounce, and remained at a height slightly greater than ours, but some distance behind the bus that acted as rearguard to the party. Its

speed must have been about ten miles an hour more than our own, for though the Boche pilot had probably throttled down, he was obliged to make his craft snake its way in short curves, so that it should not come within dangerous range of our guns. At times he varied this method by lifting the machine almost to stalling point, letting her down again and repeating the process. Once I saw some motor transport on a road. I leaned over the side to estimate their number, but gave up the task of doing so with accuracy under the double strain of watching the Hun scout and listening to the jerky voice of the engine. As we continued to drop, the Boche evidently decided to finish us. He climbed a little and then rushed ahead. I fired at him in rapid bursts, but he kept to his course. He did not come near enough for a dive, however, as the rest of the party, two thousand feet above, had watched his movements, and as soon as he began to move nearer two of them fell towards him. Seeing that his game was spoiled the Boche went down steeply, and only flattened out when he was low enough to be safe from attack. Near St Guillaume an anti-aircraft battery opened fire. The Boche pilot thought it better to leave Archie to deal with us, and he annoyed us no more. Some of the shell-bursts were quite near, and we could not afford to lose height in distance-dodging,

with our machine in a dubious condition twenty-five miles on the wrong side of the trenches.

Fleurogne, to the south-west, was to have been included in the list of towns covered, but under the adverse circumstances V. decided not to battle against the wind more than was necessary to get us home. He therefore veered to the right, and steered due west. The south-west wind cut across and drifted us, so that our actual course was north-west. Our ground speed was now a good deal greater than if we had travelled directly west, and there was no extra distance to be covered because of a large eastward bend in the lines as they wound north. We skirted the ragged Forêt de Quand-Même, and passed St Guillaume on our left.

The behaviour of the engine went from bad to worse, and the vibration became more and more intense. Once more I thought it would peter out before we were within gliding distance of British territory, and I therefore made ready to burn the machine—the last duty of an airman let in for the catastrophe of a landing among enemies. But the engine kept alive, obstinately and unevenly. V. held down the nose of the machine still further, so as to gain the lines in the quickest possible time.

Soon we were treated to a display by the family ghost of the clan Archibald, otherwise an immense pillar of grey-white smoky substance that appeared very suddenly to

windward of us. It stretched up vertically from the ground to a height about level with ours, which was then only five and a half thousand feet. We watched it curiously as it stood in an unbending rigidity similar to that of a giant wax-work, cold, unnatural, stupidly implacable, half unbelievable, and wholly ridiculous. At the top it sprayed round, like a stick of asparagus. For two or three months similar apparitions had been exhibited to us at rare intervals, nearly always in the same neighbourhood. At first sight the pillars of smoke seemed not to disperse, but after an interval they apparently faded away as mysteriously as they had appeared. What was meant to be their particular branch of frightfulness I cannot say. One theory was that they were an experiment in aerial gassing, and another that they had properties intended to rot fabric. All I know is that they entertained us from time to time, with no apparent damage.

Archie quickly distracted our attention from the phantom pillar. We had been drifted to just south of Lille, possibly the hottest spot on the whole western front as regards anti-aircraft fire. Seeing one machine four to five thousand feet below its companions, the gunners very naturally concentrated on it. A spasmodic chorus of barking coughs drowned the almost equally spasmodic roar of the engine. V. side-slipped us twice and then raced, full out,

for the lines. A sight of the dirty brown jig-saw of trenches heartened us greatly. A few minutes later we were within gliding distance of the British front. When we realised that even if the engine lost all life we could reach safety, nothing else seemed to matter, not even the storm of shell-bursts.

Suddenly the machine quivered, swung to the left, and nearly put itself in a flat spin. A large splinter of H.E. had sliced away part of the rudder. V. banked to prevent an uncontrolled side-slip, righted the bus as far as possible, and dived for the lines. We crossed them at a great pace, but did not shake off Archie until we were well on the right side, for at our low altitude the high-angle guns had a large radius of action that could include us. However, the menacing coughs finally ceased to annoy, and our immediate troubles were over. The strain snapped, the air was an exhilarating tonic, the sun was warmly comforting, and everything seemed attractive, even the desolated jumble of waste ground below us. I opened a packet of chocolate and shared it with V., who was trying hard to fly evenly with an uneven rudder. I sang to him down the speaking tube, but his nerves had stood enough for the day, and he wriggled the machine from one side to the other until I became silent. Contrariwise to the last, our engine recovered slightly now that its recovery was not so

important, and it behaved well until it seized up for better or worse when we had landed.

From the aerodrome the pilots proceeded to tea and a bath, while we, the unfortunate observers, copied our notes into a detailed report, elaborated the sketches of the new aerodromes, and drove in our unkempt state to Headquarters, there to discuss the reconnaissance with spotlessly neat staff officers. At the end of the report one must give

the height at which the job was done, and say whether the conditions were favourable or otherwise for observation. I thought of the absence of thick clouds or mist that might have made the work difficult. Then I thought of the cylinder that missed and the chunk of rudder that was missing, but decided that these little inconveniences were unofficial. And the legend I felt in duty bound to write was: "Height 5,000-10,000 ft. Observation easy."

CONTACT.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE UNITED STATES AT WAR—PRESIDENT WILSON—STATESMAN OR POLITICIAN?—THE LIBERATION OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE—THE FAILURE OF DEMOCRACY—WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR—THE GERMANS IN RUSSIA—TWO CENTURIES OF INTRUSION—THE AWAKENING—THE SINISTER INFLUENCE OF RASPUTIN.

THE somewhat tardy entrance of the United States into the war is an event which fills every member of the Entente with hope and satisfaction. Although we cannot expect the immediate passage of a well-trained and fully-equipped army across the Atlantic, we recognise the means of help which the Americans have at their disposal are neither few nor immaterial. Nobody sees more clearly than President Wilson what the declaration of war involves. "It will involve," said he in his message to Congress, "the utmost practical co-operation in council with the Governments now at war with Germany, and as incident thereto an extension to those Governments of the most liberal financial credits, in order that our resources may, as far as possible, be added to theirs." It involves much more than this. From the moment that war was declared all the vast resources of the United States were organised to increase and equip the Army and Navy of the country; a force of 500,000 men, chosen upon the only sane principle of universal service, was instantly called for. But the President insisted with perfect wisdom that the citizens of America should inter-

fere as little as possible, in their own preparation and in the equipment of their own military forces, with the practical duty of supplying the Allied nations already at war with materials which they can obtain only from America or by our assistance. "They are in the field," he says very properly; "we should help them in every way to be effective there."

We are glad also, with a certain irony, that the United States fight upon our side, because their alliance is a plain justification of our conduct during the last three years. We have been fighting the battle of the United States for many months. There can be no man, not blinded with politics, who does not know that if England and France had been defeated in the field that the United States would have been Germany's next victim. And yet we remember vague phrases about "peace without victory," and, worse still, hints that the two sides were fighting for the same object. It seemed as though Mr Wilson either mistook the meaning of history himself or put very little faith in the intelligence of the democracy, whose perfection he vaunts in his famous Message. He recognises at last that Ger-

many is waging war against mankind. He confesses that he was compelled to choose between war and submission, that he could not suffer the most sacred rights of his nation to be ignored and violated. Forgetful of what he had said in the past, he now asserts that civilisation itself was in the balance, and that right is more precious than peace. With these respectable common-places of international politics we proved our agreement in August 1914, when we sent our solemn ultimatum to Germany.

But now that we are formally and cordially allied with the United States, it is necessary that we should understand the character and motives of our friend. We have always made a friendship with America more difficult by approaching her with bended knee, and the dithyrambic chorus of praise which was sung in public to Mr Wilson's Message shows that we have not yet learnt wisdom. On all hands we have been told that it was the finest speech delivered in America since Lincoln's death. And the comparison with Lincoln proved how little those who made it understood the rhetoric of President Wilson. Between Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson there is the essential difference which must ever exist between the statesman and the politician, the leader and the follower. When Lincoln spoke to his country, he spoke as an autocrat, who knew what was right and who meant to be obeyed. Mr

Wilson's speech was as pretty a piece of politics as we have seen for a long time. He gave the impression that he was following his countrymen into war. As you read his Message you can say to which group of citizens this or that paragraph is addressed. He is led by the nation over which he presides to make war upon Germany, when the victory is almost within the grasp of the Allies, and he professes that he is fighting, among other things, for the liberation of the German peoples. We have seen the German peoples at too close quarters to share Mr Wilson's beneficent sympathy. Indeed we can attribute his opinions about Germany and the Germans only to ignorance, or to a desire to keep the Americans of German blood upon his side by a trick of flattery. He is determined to make a distinction, which does not exist, between Hohenzollerns and the German people. "We have not quarrelled with the German people," he says; "we have no feeling towards them but one of sympathy and friendship." Then why go to war? And does Mr Wilson believe that the best hope of victory lies in this kindly slurring of the truth? Again he says: "It was not upon their impulse that their Government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval." If Mr Wilson has come to this conclusion, he can have examined very few of the documents, which belong to us all. Noth-

ing emerges more clearly from the events which preceded the declaration of war than the complete unanimity of Germany. The Hohenzollerns and the German people had prepared for the war with equal zeal. They were and are one in cruelty, one in greed, one in ambition. Socialists and Junkers alike, they had prayed for the hour of world-dominion for many a long year. It was no war arranged in secret by diplomatists in the interests of the dynasty. It was a war which Germany, whole and indivisible, willed for herself, and for which she must accept the whole responsibility.

Nor can the German people be absolved of the crimes which have disgraced its conduct of the war. Sadio cruelty and a lust of destruction cannot be imposed merely from on high. Of the bestial outrages which have marked the progress of the Germans through Belgium and France all the participants are guilty, and justice will not be done after this war by inviting the Kaiser and his family to change their sky, and by setting up in Berlin a pretty little pinchbeck imitation of democratic polling booths and a "free government." The harder task lies ahead of us of teaching a whole people that it cannot live on pride and brutality alone—that as the Wise Man said, a very long time ago, science without conscience is the ruin of the soul. The truth is that Mr Wilson approaches the Germans with a strange sort of ingenuousness. That any German should have wished

ill to anybody seems to surprise him. "One of the things which have served to convince us," says he, "that Prussian auto-cracy was not and never could be our friend, is that, from the very outset of the present war, it filled our unsuspecting communities, and even our offices of government, with spies, and set criminal intrigues everywhere afoot against our national unity of council and our peace within and without, our industries and our commerce. Indeed, it is now evident that spies were here even before the war began." It was evident also in England to all save the politicians, for whom ignorance is bliss, and who would have found a foolish wisdom the loss of many votes, that every German living and working in our midst was a spy. In vain was our Government warned of the evil neighbourhood of those who used hospitality to prepare for war. But if the Germans in America were thus aiding and abetting the designs of their Government with zeal and enthusiasm, what becomes of the legend of the wicked Hohenzollerns and the virtuous German people?

Indeed, this difference which is supposed to exist between people and Kaiser is the mere figment of a politician's brain. It may serve to soothe the susceptibilities of German emigrants. As a contribution to contemporary history it is not of the smallest value. Nor are we able to agree with the causes for which Mr Wilson asserts that America draws the

sword. "We are glad," says he, "now that we see facts with no veil of false pretence about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world, for the liberation of its peoples—the German peoples included—the rights of nations great and small, and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and obedience. The world must be safe for democracy." If these "glittering generalities" mean anything, they mean that President Wilson would revert to the practice of our mid-Victorian Whigs, and insist upon handing out replicas of his own constitution to States over which he has no control. It is a practice fraught with danger, and it derives no support from the study of history. A constitution, to be serviceable, must be allowed to grow, and of political philosophy more truthfully than of diet may it be said that one man's meat is another man's poison. Mr Wilson says that he fights for the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and obedience. Suppose some nations are candid enough to prefer a benign autocrat to a scheming leader of the people, will Mr Wilson club them into obedience to his will or threaten them with all the pains and penalties of warfare unless they bend the knee to the Goddess of Democracy? Never was there so stern a tyranny proposed since the famous Holy Alliance, which was a deliberate and happily unsuccessful attempt

to interfere with a proper development of the world. It was described well enough by Gentz, the secretary of Metternich, as "the intimate union of Sovereigns, calm and constant in its action, the counterpoise to the disorder which turbulent spirits try to bring into human affairs." What it was in effect was just such an experiment in intervention as is now proposed by Mr Wilson. It was born in the mystic brain of Alexander the First, it owed not a little to the inspiration of the fantastic Madame de Krudener, and if it had not been foredoomed to failure it would have stopped the clock of Europe at an arbitrary hour upon an arbitrary day. Mr Wilson would now achieve, if he could, that which was rightly beyond the power of Alexander and the other autocrats of Europe. It is not for one man or for one generation to lay a tyrant's hand upon those who come after us. In human affairs there is no finality, and we have but to cast a glance back over the history of the world to be convinced that the war we are now waging is not the last of wars, that we can postpone its repetition only by showing no mercy to the conquered, and by leaving all nations to choose the form of government which they believe best befits them.

But, says Mr Wilson, "the world must be safe for democracy." Whether it is safe *from* democracy is not quite so certain. For democracy is not a patent medicine which we should advertise widely in

the press and cram forcibly down the gullets of strangers, as though it were for their good. It is not an ideal which can be held up before all men as worth striving for. It is a mere method of government, neither more nor less, and it must be tried, like other methods of government, by results only. Hitherto it has seldom meant wise or honest government, and most democracies have paid justly for their sins by extinction. There is one vice which has always clung to it, the vice of corruption. Wherever you have had a democracy, you have seen it attended by the twin nymphs, Graft and Boodle; and perhaps it would be better to defer the establishment of a Holy Alliance, which shall impose democracy upon an obedient world, until the democrats have purged their idol from the moral stains which disfigure it.

Moreover, it does not matter very much what are the pretexts of our war so long as we are fighting the same foe. But it is worth pointing out that neither England nor France has fired a shot nor struck a blow for the cause which to Mr Wilson seems pre-eminent. Assuredly Great Britain is fighting for something far deeper and dearer than a mere method of government. We are fighting for our lives, and for freedom to live and to think for ourselves—a freedom which an unbridled democracy would demolish, if it had the power, with swifter ferocity than an unbridled autocracy. We are

fighting because we know that a German victory would mean the extinction of the British Empire and the enslavement of the British nation. Nor as we look back upon the last ten years can we take a keen pride in our democracy, which for its own purposes left Great Britain undefended against the aggression of Germany. Lord Haldane, speaking as one of democracy's leaders, declares that the wonder is, "not that we were so unprepared, but that we were as well prepared as was the case. For the public did not insist that the unrest of Europe should be the foremost subject of consideration, nor was it ready to devote the nation's energies to securing its future in peace any more than in war." It is a pleasant prospect this of giving ourselves over bound hand and foot to a democracy which "suffered from an indisposition to reflect." Yet this is what the blind optimism and criminal inactivity of Lord Haldane persuaded us to do. He knew what preparations the Germans were making to attack us, and he did nothing, because the public, which he kept in the dark, did not insist upon defence. Thus it is that democracy involved us, with the aid of supine Ministers, in a vicious circle from which there might have been no escape. Why then should we sacrifice our lives to defend a system which, for its own selfish purposes, came within an ace of destroying the Empire and of establishing throughout the world the unchallenged hegemony of the Kaiser?

Our conflict with Germany, then, is wholly purged of the dross of politics and political systems. And with even greater truth may France assert that she wages war for her life and her land, and not for any pedantry about forms of government. She has as little reason to love her democracy as we have to love ours. Although her risk was infinitely greater, she too in 1914 faced a hostile Germany unprepared. It was the fault of her democracy that her soldiers at the outset were asked to go forth to fight without boots. And for the many derelictions of duty which imperilled her country the politicians, let us hope, will some day be asked to account. Such a man as M. Caillaux, whose activities do not seem to be at an end, could flourish only in the close atmosphere of a democracy. And if we may parody one of our own ardent Radicals, we might say that the system represented by M. Caillaux and his friends was not worth the bones of a single grenadier. It is not for such trumpety causes as that of democracy that men bleed and die upon the battlefield. Loyalty, patriotism, nationality, the hope of decent life and sound morals—these are the things for which heroes fight, and not the silly accidents of constitutions or governments. It is better, then, that we should forget words and come to realities. Let politicians amuse themselves by discovering the blameless causes for which they think they have drawn

the sword. But let the Allies go forward, oblivious of the politicians, and conscious only that they have a single enemy—Germany; a single aim—her complete destruction.

Meanwhile, the pedants who deal with words and theories are filled with pride that a revolution has taken place in Russia. They are quick to assume a sort of credit for this strange episode in the war, and it is not surprising that they have not understood the meaning of the sudden uprising. To them any revolution is better than none, and they rub their hands with satisfaction as they think that they are the witnesses of the greatest event, as it seems to them, which has happened in Europe since 1789. But when we look at the actual facts a little more closely, we shall see that the revolution in Russia was, in its inception, a movement not of the people but of the governing class and of the army. Nor was its object the realisation of any vague dreams about freedom and ballot-boxes. At the outset it was an anti-German movement, and no more; and since the Czar and Czarina were themselves caught up in the net of Teutonism, it was essential for the safety of the State that they should be removed from the possibility of exercising an evil influence. We cannot understand the Russian situation without a brief retrospect. We know well enough from our own bitter experience that the Germans are *mauvais coucheurs*—very ill to live with. They are not

content to eat their bread in peace when they establish themselves in a foreign country. They must ever be stirring up strife and bringing trouble upon the land foolish enough to receive them. And nowhere did they find a better opportunity for their detestable gifts than in Russia. The Russians are by temperament and by habit inapt for affairs. They are dreamers of dreams, seers of visions. Content to produce masterpieces of literary art, to teach to Europe the craft of fiction, they have not always deemed it worth while to discharge the common duties of life and commerce, and have thus fallen beneath the sway of their self-seeking, uninspired, and bloodthirsty neighbour. The story of Prussia's encroachment upon the Russian Empire is old and long; nor can it be said that the Czars themselves have done much to protect their people against the Hunnish aggression. Rather they have encouraged the evil, with a good motive — the better administration of the country. It was Peter the Great, blameless in intention, who first prepared this great danger for his country. When he had changed the whole structure of Russia, he looked about him for men capable of carrying out his will, and of his own race he found none. So he was driven at last to invite the aid of Germans. The Germans responded with eager-

ness. From the Baltic provinces and from farther afield they flocked into Russia, resolved to get what they could out of it for their own pocket, and to see to it that never again should the heavy hand of the Huns be taken from the throat of their confiding neighbour. So there was no part of Russian life which they did not try, in their egoism, to make their own. The Russian Academy, German in its origin, remained German in language and sympathy until recent years. Mr G. de Wesselitsky tells us that when Mendeleyeff, the distinguished man of science, received an honorary degree at Oxford in 1894, he was naturally referred to as a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and as a matter of fact the Russian was the only Academy in Europe of which he was not a member. His birth disqualified him.¹ Indeed, throughout the eighteenth century the German influence encroached everywhere, until on the death of the Empress Elizabeth, who had the courage to oppose Frederick II., her heir, Peter III., restored all the territory which the Russian army had conquered, and even placed his army beneath the command of the Prussian king. Frederick showed no gratitude for this complaisance, and in the very act of confessing that he owed his salvation to Russia, he sent

¹ See 'Russia and Democracy: the German Canker in Russia,' by G. de Wesselitsky, with a Preface by Henry Cust, a work which may be commended to our readers as a valuable storehouse of facts.

his emissaries to persuade the Khan of the Crimea to make war upon his friend.

Peter III.'s pro-Germanism cost him his throne, and Catherine the Great, his widow and successor, made the one successful attempt, which Russia has faced, at reaction against the baleful influence. Though she carried German blood in her veins, she was Russian, when she was not French, in her sympathies and friendships. On the one hand, she counted such men as Diderot and the Prince de Ligne among her intimates; on the other, she did her best to govern her great country in accord with the hopes and wishes of her people. If she did not wholly succeed, it was because the settled domination of Germany was already too strong for her. She died with her work but half accomplished, and would have bequeathed her kingdom, if she could, to Alexander, her grandson. Unhappily her son Paul I. interposed, and sat upon the throne long enough to bring back the German cuckoos into the Russian nest, to pervert the policy of his country once more into the false path, which it kept for nearly a century. And Alexander I., that fateful Hamlet of the North, could not, even if he would, have saved his nation from its wolfish neighbours. The strange passion for Germany and the Germans which has consumed all the Czars of Russia, until Alexander III. made his *Entente* with France, seized upon

Alexander I. with a double intensity. He counted the weak and cunning William III. among his friends, and threw himself, a humble adorer, at the feet of Queen Louisa. At Tilsit the fate of Prussia might have been sealed for ever. Napoleon, who had no pity for cowards or weaklings, would gladly have broken Frederick William III. and his barbarous kingdom into such small pieces that they could never be put together again. And Alexander interposed to save them. It is not often given to mortal man to make so vast a renunciation as Alexander I. made willingly for his ungrateful friends. He might, if he would, have extended his kingdom to the Vistula and the Danube. He might have witnessed the complete humiliation of the country which had proved its treachery to Russia for a century, and is still playing the traitor in this time of war, to the peril of all Europe. Thus by a false loyalty Alexander changed for the worse the history of the modern world. Nor did his generosity bring him the smallest advantage. Prussia has never been known to betray any feeling of gratitude, and no sooner had Napoleon promised, at the request of the Czar, to save Prussia from extinction than Frederick William III. began to suspect Alexander of some subtle hostility against himself and France. And it is characteristic of the two men that while Alexander was pleading for Prussia's salvation, that

graceless sycophant was on his knees before Napoleon, begging him with tears in his voice to give him the Baltic provinces of Russia.

Thus the game of deception was played by Germany with varying tactics, and always to the same end—the complete penetration of Russia. The Russians, dominated by German Ministers and German bureaucrats, began to believe that their neighbour was indispensable to them, and that the mere word of a German was like another's bond. Whichever page of Russian history you turn, you will find the same melancholy intrigue in progress. The war of 1870 would have been impossible without the freely given aid of Russia. Bismarck and his master, William I., seem to have disposed of Alexander II. as they chose. It was the Czar's warning to Austria which prevented that Power from going to the aid of France. And when the war was over William I., telegraphing to Alexander II., told no more than the truth when he said: "After the Almighty, it is to you that Germany owes most of her success." Bismarck requited the generosity of Russia after the true German fashion. He did his best to involve her in the Turkish war of 1877, and then to steal from her the fruits of victory. The poor Czar, tricked by his friend and weakened by success, could only demand of a Russian statesman, "Do you doubt my uncle's honour?" Like the dupe that he was, he took a

more favourable view of his uncle's honour than did that uncle himself. When William I. was forced by Bismarck to sign a treaty of alliance with Austria against Russia, he confessed that it was "manifestly dishonourable," and, *more suo*, signed it.

Still more dangerous, because more subtle, are the German methods of colonisation and perversion. Mr de Wesselitsky tells us that some five-and-twenty years ago a peaceful attack was made upon Russia with infinite skill and foresight. "German syndicates," he says, "directed by the German Government, were buying land in Russian Poland as well as in Western and Southern Russia, which they were afterwards reselling to German farmers. The influence of the St Petersburg Germans, adroitly assisted by the German diplomacy, contrived to keep the Russian Government in ignorance of this methodical activity, which was only disclosed by a private investigation organised by a Russian monthly review." With immunity the Germans grew bolder yet. In 1905, we are told, a plan was laid to buy up by German syndicates the estates of Russian nobles and the communal lands of the peasants. The territories thus acquired were to be re-sold to "skilful and intelligent German farmers, who would cultivate them scientifically with cheap Russian labour." Then many priceless benefits would follow for *Kultur*. Industrious German tradesmen would fasten their greedy hands upon small

towns, and German manufacturers would found factories, and grow rich upon the ill-paid work of Russian peasants, until "regenerated Russia would form an appendage to the Central European agglomeration of States directed by Germany."

That such a plan should have ever been devised is remarkable enough. It fills us with yet greater wonder that the great part of it was successfully carried out. Warnings were unheard or purposely disregarded. M. de Wesselitsky tells us that in 1910 he told Stolypin, the Prime Minister, that the Germans by "peaceful" and insidious methods were laying hands upon the Baltic Provinces. Stolypin confessed, in reply, that though the state of the Baltic Provinces was bad enough, a far greater danger was the constant, unhampered immigration into the south-west of Russia. A Bill, he said, had been drafted to deal with the peril, and he was sure that the Duma would pass it without delay on account of its urgency. "That Bill," M. de Wesselitsky tells us, "never even came up for discussion in the Duma, and was withdrawn in 1913 by Stolypin's successor. So great was the German influence with every party in the Russian Parliament as well as with the Government." We have said enough to prove how widely spread in Russia was the German infection. Teutonism was a poisonous microbe which had debilitated all classes. Since in Russia the middle-class is very small, much of the actual

work of the country was done by Germans, and no German lifted a hand who was not enrolled, so to say, in the Kaiser's army. Thus there grew up an *imperium in imperio* which has come near to destroying Russia and the world.

We know well enough in this country in how fast a grip the Germans held those with whom they professed to live upon terms of amity. Even after three years of war we have no firm faith either that German spies are not moving about in our midst, or that German men of business are not protected and encouraged by our governors. And the state of Russia is a hundred times worse than the state of England. When war was declared, the Germans, universally active, forgot the claims of hospitality, and did their best to undermine and to ruin the generous land which had sheltered them. While the Russians were fighting the Germans on the frontier, the Germans were fighting the Russians everywhere—in the munition factories, in the Government offices, in the Imperial Council Chamber itself. Whatever was thought or done in Petrograd was reported instantly at Berlin. There was a German ear at every keyhole, a German eye at every window. Neither the Cabinet was free from the intruding spy, nor the General Staff. More than one general was suspected of the Hunnish taint, and the Prime Minister was known to be Teutonic in sympathy as in name. Not even in war was necessity forgotten "to uphold

the traditional Russo-German friendship, in order to save the monarchy"; and there is little doubt that, had not the revolution intervened, a separate peace would have been signed between Germany and Russia.

So much must be remembered before we allow the democrats to applaud the final triumph of their creed. The revolution in Russia is the logical result of more than two centuries of German influence. The reactionaries, inspired and paid, no doubt, by the Kaiser, took care that the party of moderate reform should always be discredited, and that men should be punished in Moscow and Petrograd for the simple freedoms which were everywhere else enjoyed. The true "underground Russia" was inhabited not by Nihilists preparing bombs, but by Germans concocting plots and playing with great skill the part of *agent provocateur*. And when the crisis came, when at last it was found necessary for the salvation of Russia to get rid of the German influence, it was inevitable that the Czar and the Czarina should disappear from the throne, for they were more dangerously poisoned by the Teutonic virus than any of them. But revolutions are perilous things at any time, and most perilous are they in the midst of a great war. Their meaning and necessity are instantly misunderstood by the fanatics of all kinds. So the revolution began in Russia as the only means of saving the country from the clutch

of Germany, and already it is acclaimed by the fool as a red revolution which is going to regenerate the whole world, and to bring speedily a new heaven upon our old earth. There is nothing so dangerous as loose talk of this kind. It has often been pointed out that more blood has been shed by the repetition of moral maxims than by the sharpening of ten thousand swords. And to-day all the restless spirits, attracted by any kind of revolution, are alive and alert in Russia. They are asking, every one of them, their pound of flesh, their hundredweight of freedom. The socialists are demanding the instant possession of everything; the peace-mongers are shouting that the German plotters and murderers are their brothers, that capital is the only foe; the democrats are insisting upon the right to elect from their own numbers all the officers required by the navy and the army, in complete forgetfulness that discipline is the essence of war, and that no man may conduct a campaign victoriously merely because he is a winner at the ballot-box.

The result of it all is that the Russian revolution, which began as a patriotic movement of the army and the Government towards victory, is in danger of becoming the mere instrument of fanaticism. Yet we have faith in Russia's wisdom and Russia's essential moderation. When the newness of the situation has worn

off, it will be clear to all that it is hopeless to think of moving at a single step from the fifteenth century to the twenty-first. If stability is ever to be attained, it must be attained by a slower method of progress than this. When peace is signed, there will be time to discuss plans and to invent constitutions. In the crisis of a life-and-death war we must be satisfied with a rough-and-ready approximation to wisdom. Therefore we cannot but hold out a sympathetic hand to the new Government, in the confident assurance that it is handling a difficult situation with the best sense that is vouchsafed to mortal man—that never will it lose a brilliant chance of getting rid for ever of the German influence for the mere flattering of a superstition, for the easy gratification of a pack of fanatical tub-thumpers.

There is one side of the Russian revolution which remains to be considered, and here again the past of Russia is our best guide in attempting to understand the present. In the first place, the sudden deposition of the Czar seems strange to us, who, in spite of 1688, still believe in the doctrine of primogeniture. In Russia, it is but a common experience that a Romanoff should be superseded or suppressed. Peter and Paul and Constantine are examples which come readily to our mind, and, before the country settles down again to enjoy the fruits of an orderly Gov-

ernment, there may be other instances of the freedom claimed by a hitherto autocratically ruled people to choose its sovereign. Then again there is the atmosphere of occultism, in which the Russian revolution seems to be enveloped. Unintelligible to our simple minds, this occultism stimulates in Russia nothing but a mild curiosity. No people is alarmed overmuch at that which does not transcend its normal expectation. And it must be remembered that Russia has always been the home of wizards and soothsayers, of Sibyls and Egerias. Alexander I. bowed his knee submissively to the monk Phetius, to Arakchieff, and to Mme. de Krudener. Zealous and well-meaning as he was, he was not often master of his own thoughts and his own deeds. And he is but one example of many. In a country still mediæval in character superstition dies hard, and we may find in Russia's present history new instances of the old credulity. Had it not been for the hideous creature called Rasputin, there might have been no revolution in Russia at all. The influence which he gained could have been gained only in a land of late development. He was cunning, ob-scene, ignoble, and he took so firm a hold of the Russian Court that he made it his slave, and precipitated the change of Government which we have seen. He possessed no gifts of mind or speech that he should have seemed desir-

able. But he moved in what circles he chose, and truculently exacted from all the deference which should have been due only to wisdom and grandeur. By a stroke of cunning, and with the aid of accomplices near the throne, he pretended that he had a secret influence upon the life of the heir to the Russian throne. So long as he was there to watch and ward, he said, the boy was safe. Were he withdrawn, the worst might happen at any moment. When so much is admitted, it is not difficult to understand that his plot of blackmail succeeded. He became the dark figure behind the throne, and since he was the recipient of German gold, it is evident that victory could never have been Russia's so long as he was there to prevent it. His dirty habits, his unspeakable character, his common effrontery, produced at last their proper effect. At the very moment that he thought himself master of the country, he was justly murdered, not by a parcel of democrats displeased with the autocracy, but by a small party of aristocrats, intent to avenge the insults put upon the Court and upon their own order.

The murder of Rasputin was

the real beginning of the revolution. After that there was no going back, and this fact alone shows us plainly that the revolt in its inception was, as we have said, a revolt from above. If only Russia had discovered at the beginning a Mirabeau of her own, there would have been no danger. But, alas! Mirabeaus are not often born into the world, and we must e'en take things as we find them. And even while we confess to ourselves a certain nervousness, we acknowledge that there is abundant ground for hope. The Russian people, easily led as it is, is sound at the heart. It has a fervent pride and a fervent belief in its own nationality, and it will not rest until it has participated in the general triumph of the Allies, and killed for ever the German serpent of intrigue, which has wound itself about its Court and its Government. Thus it is that, whatever motives they profess, the Allies—France and Britain, Russia and the United States and the rest—share the same purpose. They will not rest until Germany is crushed, and that the process of crushing is now beginning, all may see who watch the fighting on the Western Front.

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BESIEGED IN KUT—AND AFTER.

BY C. B.

XIV.

THE last phase! It couldn't be a long one, we knew, but we still had great faith in our comrades down below, and had no thought of giving in before every ounce of our stuff had been consumed.

The idea of having to open our gates to the enemy made one furious, and one resolutely put aside the possibility of becoming prisoner for yet another week or more. Nobody grumbled, save at unkind Fate, and large numbers of the Indians at last took to eating the meat. Poor devils! they were desperately hungry and were glad of anything they could get. Though we jested and joked and made light of each other's vanishing figure, yet it was a time of misery—a long-drawn-out agony of suspense and disappointment, and of not a little suffering.

There was no lack of incident: the slaughter down below, the herculean efforts our people were making to relieve us, and their attempts to feed us; the effects of starvation on the garrison, the unrest amongst the Arabs—all combined to make it a time to be remembered and deplored. . . .

General Hoghton lay dying. He could not eat the horse meat and became a shadow of his former robust self. He was one of the first victims of an acute intestinal trouble that was fatal to so many in those last three weeks. He died on the 13th and was buried the same day. All who could do so attended his funeral to bid farewell to a good man and to mourn his loss. A military funeral is always impressive, but under those conditions it was doubly so. Silent and

sorrowful we stood around and listened to the well-known service recited in the padre's solemn tones. They ceased—a brief pause, and then the bugles took up the refrain, and clear and mournful rang out those wonderful notes of the "Last Post." Were they prophetic, we wondered, of the fate of Kut? . . .

The weather grew cold again; the wind blew from the north-east and brought with it a perfect hurricane and yet more rain, but the R.F. stuck to it in a wonderful way, and we constantly heard their guns at work and saw their flashes at night, though the 15th came and they seemed no nearer. They wired to say they were going to feed us by aeroplane and to drop us 5000 lb. a day. It was about time; we were down to 4 oz. of bread now: coarse, damp stuff, made of half-ground barley-meal with a plentiful flavouring of sand; and we had issued to us the last two days' emergency rations, which were to be kept until further orders. It was said that our people down below wired up suggesting that we should search the town for food! It was a brilliant idea, but was a few weeks behind the times. On the 16th April they made several trips and dropped us a good many sacks—two at a time. We felt as Elijah must have done when he had to depend on the ravens. But it takes a lot of aeroplanes to feed 15,000 to 20,000 people. Had they started a month

before it would have made some appreciable difference. As it was, it only enabled us to hang on for another couple of days or so. Watching food dropping became a popular amusement, especially amongst our Indian patients. A plane would be heard approaching; spectators would rush out and stand gaping, laughing, and chattering about it like children. "Dekko! Dekko! abhi girega! Nahin, Nahin! itna nazdik nahin hai. Abhi dekho! Aah! giradya" ("he's made it fall"). A wee speck could be seen leaving the "bus"; over and over it turned, larger and larger—generally two of them—faster and faster, till it whizzed down behind a house, and one imagined the "wump!" with which it landed. They always put one sack inside another and larger one, so that when the inside one burst the outer one prevented the scattering of the precious flour. Now and then they dropped a load into the river or into the Turkish lines, where they were doubtless thankful for some extra rations. It generally seemed to be the sailor-men who did this. Perhaps with the larger vision one acquires at sea, it was difficult to see so small a bit of land as Kut. These "boss shots" gave occasion, at any rate—so it was said—for the sending of facetious messages over the wireless to them down below: "Would H.M. Navy mind dropping *us* something now and then instead of to the Turks?" "Was the R.F. quite sure it was on the right

river?" and so forth. On the 17th we heard a great battle going on. Machine-gun and rifle fire was distinctly audible and we were mightily cheered. It was the fighting at Beit Aiessa, only six or seven miles away! In the middle of it all our men in the trenches started cheering, with the result that there was a wild stampede of Arabs "down our street." They thought the Turks were coming, but there was nothing to be seen, and goodness only knows what it was all about, unless our men thought they saw a body of Turks retreating. Our hopes that such was the case were soon dissipated, for they started shelling us again, so they were evidently not upset very much.

That same night there was more furious fighting over against Beit Aiessa, where the Turks were counter-attacking and losing so heavily. We heard afterwards that our people counted 1500 dead next morning.

In the morning of the 19th there was more heavy cannonading, but we didn't learn the result. The 20th came, and the Army Commander sent in a message, saying: "Stick to it, Gorrings will relieve you in a few days." We stuck to it. The next day we heard that the Turks had lost very heavily and that the R.F. were consolidating their position! But our rations were almost at an end; the emergency ration had to be used on the morrow. We began to grow despondent. We were hungry and thin, and getting weaker. The steps up

to the roof seemed to get larger, and one was often "blown" on reaching the top. Sapper Tomlin came in and said they were bored to tears. "There's nothing to do," he grumbled; "the men are too weak to work, so we're out of a job."

We ourselves had plenty to do, but the work was heart-breaking. The small stock of rice that had been set apart for the hospitals, with which we had been feeding those who couldn't eat solid food, was used up, and the milk was reduced to a bottle or two. Some of the patients were woefully thin; and when an Indian gets thin he is an appalling object. Many died, chiefly from intestinal troubles, but we were helpless; it is useless to oil or stimulate a machine if you can't give it coal for its engines!

It made us long for the end—any end almost, for the sake of the miserable sick. In any event another week would settle it.

We talked of "menus" often, in the manner peculiar to starving people, and of what we would first have to eat when we were free again; where we would go for leave, and how luxuriously lazy we would be for the first few days. Our bread came to us in 8-oz. loaves for two people. So fearful were we of not getting our full half that it became an invariable rule that one cut the loaf and the other chose his half. This method ensures the maximum amount of care and accuracy on the part of the cutter.

On the night of the 21st a

party of Arabs deserted the town and got away across the river. The rats were beginning to leave the sinking ship! The Turks let us know that they would not receive any more, but would shoot them if they tried it. But, although the Arabs were told that if they left the town they wouldn't be allowed in again, they persisted in their attempts. The next day a large group of them was very busy for hours in the open street making a large raft out of wooden settees and inflated skins wherewith to cross the stream. But they didn't succeed, for the Turks were as good as their word, with the result that there were several in hospital next morning.

On the 22nd there was a heavy cannonade in the morning, and we could see the bursts of H.E. over a long line of a mile or more; but the result was another disappointment, for the next day we got a *communiqué* to say that the R.F. had not taken Sanaaiyat, but had advanced a little on the right bank. As a set-off the aeroplanes made fourteen or fifteen trips and dropped food.

It was Easter Sunday, and Trixie and I went to church in the morning. The two little rooms, still intact, were crowded with officers. Why had so many come that day? Was it to share in the joyous festival of Easter, of the resurrection of the God-man, or was it the growing fear in our hearts that the service would be the last of its kind in Kut, and that the future was so full of uncertainty?

Be that as it may, there was a very good attendance, and after the morning service the Communion was held. One by one, in a silence that could be felt, the gaunt and war-worn defenders, with the thoughtful eyes of those who had seen much, went up each in his turn and knelt before the padre. A deep hush fell over us all, and in those few moments men got near to their God. . . .

On the 24th a quiver of excitement went through us when we got wind of the impending attempt of the R.F. to run the blockade by a boat full of food. We could hardly sleep for thinking about it, and were up on the H.Q. roof as the sun rose. There she was, the gallant *Julnar*, over against Megasis Fort, stuck in the mud just within range of our longest guns, with her splendid captain on her bridge lying dead in a pool of his own blood. So pleased were the Turks—so one of their officers who was there told me afterwards—with the gallant bravery of poor Cowley and the other man with him on the *Julnar*, that they, then and there, gave them a special military funeral in recognition of their magnificent effort, which so nearly succeeded. But the enemy had her, and her capture “put the lid on it all.” Deep down within us we knew we were now done for, that our people couldn't get through, and that for us it meant Baghdad, or Mosul, or God only knew where! We did not acknowledge it yet, however, and that day another

auction was held, at which prices ruled higher than ever: a box of cheroots fetched 206 rupees, and a tin of fifty Wills' cigarettes were sold for over £3—surely the biggest money ever paid for "Three Castles"!

That night, after leaving us almost alone for a day or two, the Turks gave us a bad "strafeing," and followed it up by an evening hate next day and another night bombardment, much to the discomfort of a Turkish envoy who stayed the night in the town. They also accounted for at least one of the aeroplanes of the R.F. that had been working very hard at our food supply, but now got interfered with by the Fokkers, that had the wings of them.

On the 23rd and 24th we had eaten our first day's emergency ration split into two; on the 25th and 26th we fed on the aeroplane supply, and on the 27th we broached half of our last day's reserve ration.

On the 26th we heard that negotiations were in progress, that all was about to be over, and the next morning the General went to interview the Turk. It was unthinkable that the old flag would have to come down, and we were heart-broken about it. After the many disappointments and the awful suspense we had passed through, the final blow seemed almost too much. One had thought during those last few days that almost any ending would be preferable to the intolerable uncertainty, that any settlement would be a relief to

the mental tension, but it was not so; when the end came the disappointment was too great,—it overshadowed everything else.

The town was quiet, the guns and the sniping ceased; the silence was uncanny! The Arabs came out of their houses in large numbers and hung about, talking in groups. There was no disturbance: guards of British Tommies had been placed at different points to prevent it. We wandered about listlessly, or sat in our courtyard and guessed at the terms we should get.

Would they take us all prisoners, or would they let us go on parole? Would the Geneva Convention hold, and the doctors go down with the sick, or would they be exchanged? These and a hundred other questions remained unanswered whilst the hours dragged slowly by. I met the General with his Staff returning from the interview. He looked fairly well and carried his head high. He had done all that man could do and had no cause to be ashamed—but what a disappointment after five months of gallant resistance! General Melliss, too, felt it most acutely: he had been ill for some days, and I shall not easily forget the signs of suffering I read on his weather-beaten face; the surrender seared his very soul.

The next day, the 28th, we destroyed things. Guns were blown up, and bits of them were flying about in a most dangerous way; rifles were smashed up, waggons were

burnt; ammunition was dumped into the river at night; field-glasses, swords, and pistols were broken and thrown away. Some day in the future, when those Arabs dig up their cess-pits or clean out their wells, they'll find many a bit of rusty old iron of suggestive shape; maybe their drinking-water will develop tonic properties and improve the village health—who knows?

Finally, Townshend issued his last characteristically optimistic *communiqué*, and prepared us for the morrow's surrender. It was all over; the unbelievable had happened: Kut had fallen! Thus Townshend, on the 28th:—

"It became clear, after General Gorringer's second repulse on 22nd April at Sanaaiyat, of which I was informed by the Army Commander by wire, that the Relief Force could not win its way through in anything like time to relieve us, our limit of resistance as regards food being the 29th April. . . .

"I was then ordered to open negotiations for the surrender of Kut; in the words of the Army Commander's telegram, 'the onus not lying on yourself. You are in a position of having conducted a gallant and successful defence, and you will be in a position to get better terms than any emissary of ours. . . . The Admiral, who has been in consultation with the Army Commander, considers that you, with your prestige, are likely to get the best terms; we can, of course,

supply food as you may arrange.'

"These considerations alone, namely, that I can help my comrades of all ranks to the end, have decided me to overcome my bodily illness and the anguish of mind which I am suffering now, and I have interviewed the Turkish General-in-Chief yesterday, who is full of admiration at 'an heroic defence of five months,' as he puts it.

"Negotiations are still in progress, but I hope to be able to announce your departure for India, on parole not to serve against the Turks, since the Turkish Commander says he thinks it will be allowed, and has wired to Constantinople to ask for this, and that the *Julnar*, which is lying with food for us at Megasis, now may be permitted to come to us. Whatever has happened, my comrades, you can only be proud of yourselves. We have done our duty to King and Empire; the whole world knows we have done our duty.

"I ask you to stand by me with your ready and splendid discipline, shown throughout, in the next few days for the expedition of all service I demand of you. We may possibly go into camp, I hope, between the Fort and town along the shore, whence we can easily embark.

"The following message has been received from the Army Commander: 'The C.-in-C. has desired me to convey to you and your brave and devoted troops his appreciation of the manner in which you together

have undergone the suffering and hardships of the siege, which he knows has been due to the high spirit of devotion to duty in which you have met the call of your Sovereign and Empire. The C.-in-C.'s sentiments are shared by myself, General Gorringe, and all the troops of the Tigris Column. We can only express extreme disappointment and regret our effort to relieve you should not have been crowned with success.'"

Copy of a Telegram from Captain Nunn, C.M.G., R.N.—

"We, the officers and men of the Royal Navy who have been associated with the Tigris Corps, and many of us so often worked with you and your gallant troops, desire to express our heartfelt regret at our inability to join hands with you and your comrades in Kut."

And so, with a farewell from our friends below, we went into captivity.

XV.

The 29th of April 1916—the surrender was an accomplished fact. Going to hospital early that morning, I saw nothing of the "taking over" or of the Division marching out, but I walked on to the river bank for a few minutes, where there were signs of the new state of things. A motor launch flying a white flag was scudding across to Woolpress; a Turkish barge was working its way down by the bank, and the few Turks aboard her were throwing service biscuits to the very few Arab gamins and loafers whose curiosity had brought them forth. For five solid months that bank had been a no man's land, and it was strange now to be walking about it without being shot at,—one felt naked and unsafe. I couldn't trust myself to go towards the Serai to see what had happened to the "flag," and I never knew when it came down—imagin-

ing it was more than enough. My first intimation of the change of ownership of the town was when, returning to my quarters, I found Turkish soldiers patrolling the streets. They had just come in, and I was astonished to find things quiet and orderly. On the threshold of the Mess I was met by an excited servant. "Master, come quickly, there are enemy soldiers in your room stealing your things!" I ran up to an upper room, where the day before I had been looking through my kit, and found there three ragged, bronzed, and hefty Turks disporting themselves amongst my wardrobe, and bashing open my boxes with the butt-end of their muskets. I proceeded to expostulate in every language I knew other than English, but they merely stared. Doing so they noticed my revolver, which I was unfortunately still wearing. One fellow promptly seized it and

pulled. My protests only irritated him, and he pulled and wrenched the more, whilst his nearest comrade closed up with an ugly-looking bayonet, so I came to the conclusion that the Geneva Convention was just then a broken reed and withdrew my objections, and went outside to see if I could find some one in authority. This I did by chance at the gate, and explained the matter with some heat to a Turkish officer who was passing by. He said that all arms had to be given up, doctors' and all, but took my name and the pistol, and promised to have it returned to me if it could be allowed. Of course, I heard no more about it. However, he moved on my "looters," and we proceeded to put what remained to us in as safe a place as possible; but more things disappeared. All day long and at night the Turks wandered in to see what they could pick up. They were not offensive in any way, but just walked in and turned over anything they came across, and if they fancied it, took it. As we had to stay behind alone amongst the new masters of Kut, this sort of thing became a nuisance; but after two or three efforts, we got them to put a sentry at the door of the "Hakims'" dwelling, and we had no more trouble.

Returning to hospital, I found very considerable looting going on. The Osmanlis were sauntering through the Bazar looting blankets, boots, puttees, and anything else of a useful nature, from the miser-

able patients. Looking at them, one didn't wonder. Their uniforms were ragged and patched in all directions, their boots were worn beyond hope of repair, and they were generally most disreputable-looking specimens of a modern army. But they were good-natured-looking fellows—broad, strong as oxen, with plenty of bone, ruddy complexions, and in many cases blue eyes and ginger whiskers. They looked what they were, I suppose, just easy-going, illiterate Anatolian peasantry; but get them really annoyed, and they are very rough customers, and would, I should say, stick at nothing.

After a good deal of trouble and of worrying a *jeune* Turk who was in charge of our "quarter," we got them to place sentries at most of the openings into the Hospitals, and matters improved considerably. The difficulty thereafter was to prevent our men fraternising with the enemy and selling to him for any sort of pittance such things as they still possessed.

The next thing was a meeting of the respective medical chiefs of the two forces to decide upon rations and the treatment of the sick and wounded. I had the good fortune to be present at this interesting conference. We were taken on board a big river steamer of theirs which had just come down from Shamran, one of those we had so often espied from the roof. With great show of politeness our chief and the rest of us were led on

to the upper deck and introduced to the Médecin-en-Chef and his entourage. Coffee was brought and cigarettes were handed round. Then they got to business. "Strengths" were noted, questions asked regarding numbers of sick and kinds of diseases, and arrangements were made for Turkish medical officers to visit our hospitals, and, together with our own officers, to examine and pick out all the most seriously sick and wounded. These it had been arranged were to be sent down the river in exchange for Turkish prisoners.

Before leaving, we chatted with the Turks for a few minutes: they deplored the war and the suffering it entailed, and spoke of the humanitarian nature of our profession which enabled us to meet on common ground. They referred to the gallant effort of the *Julnar* to get through to us, and expressed the greatest admiration for the officers and crew who manned her.

By this time the aspect of Kut had changed—the town appeared to be *en fête*. Every other Arab house flaunted a red or red-and-white flag, even as some months before they had put up their white one for us to show their respect and friendliness for the conqueror. The streets were thronged with Arabs and Turks, apart from those on duty, wandering about inspecting the village and doubtless noting the ruin their shells had caused. Mounted patrols of Arab cavalry, looking as though out out of a picture story, covered with

pistols and extraordinary trappings, rode through from time to time and added to the picturesqueness of the scene and to the disorganisation of hospital life. The sight of these out-throats seemed to rub in the indignity of being a prisoner, and one cursed one's fate.

The next morning the promised rations did not turn up; it was not until late in the afternoon that we got hold of them and were able to feed our famishing patients. After that we got them regularly. During the day the *Firefly* came down and moored alongside the bank. Painted up by the Turks and as clean as a new pin, she looked very smart and English, though she no longer flew the white ensign. The Turkish sailors looked very natty in their white duck trimmed with red and blue, and they moved about nimbly enough.

As I stood there looking on, all eyes turned shoreward, and following their gaze I saw the Turkish Generalissimo approaching with his Staff, and with him General Delamain and two or three Staff Officers. With set face and self-conscious mien Khalil Pasha walked aboard followed by Delamain, and up the little companion to the bridge deck, where they seated themselves in chairs placed for the purpose. He gave a short, curt order, and the sailors immediately cast off and headed upstream. So, with honour, a British General passed into captivity, but it was not good to see him go. Khalil Pasha

is young and handsome, well made, of average height—an open face with fresh complexion and deep-set brown eyes, and a well-chiselled chin—he did not look more than thirty-three years of age, and his movements were quick and purposeful.

The next few days we were busy showing our cases to the Turkish M.O.'s, explaining briefly their trouble and condition, whereupon the Turk would examine them and decide their fate. It was pathetic to watch the anxiety of some of the lads, as they watched the deliberations and awaited the verdict that should decide their fate.

The work was strenuous, for the weather was hot, and we were glad to get out on the river bank in the evenings. Kut from the river presented a sorry sight; the Serai was half down, the S. and T. godown beyond it a wreck. The old coffee-shop was a ruined mass of brick, and the lower Bazar and the rest of the Front showed numerous holes. Within a couple of days the Turks were pulling down what was left of the portion nearest the river. Further signs of the Turkish occupation, of a more gruesome character, were also very soon in evidence. Three rough wooden tripods about eight feet high were erected on the most open portion of the bank, and on these they hanged various Arab delinquents whom they suspected of helping their enemies. The wretched Sassoon, who had been of such great assistance to our S. and

T. Corps, was one of these. Just before the fall of Kut he had gone into hiding, but his hiding-place was betrayed to the Turks, who chased him from it and finally caught him on a roof. Here they beat him unmercifully, and then took him out and hanged him. Their method is a simple one—they just string them up and let them dangle with their toes an inch or two above the ground. Several batches of other poor wretches were also shot with their backs to the wall. I came across five in a row one morning, lying in all sorts of positions, and saw another batch of a dozen being led off to a place of execution. They had gambled and lost!

On the 1st of May a river hospital ship came up from the R.F. with a medical staff on board. The presence of the staff dashed our own hopes of taking the sick down, but otherwise we were more than pleased to see them, and to shout a message or two for them to send home. They brought up with them a barge full of food stores, which were taken up to Shamran where our troops were encamped, the barge returning in the evening. We in Kut had been left out of the calculation and got nothing, but Trixie and I managed to get as much as we could carry from our friends on the boat. We were strolling along having a look at the hospital ship, from approaching which we were debarred by sentries, when a medico on the barge hailed us with the words,

"Could you do with some jam? do you want any baccy?" *Could we do with some jam?*—they didn't seem to realise that we'd had none of either for weeks! Anyhow, a good-natured sentry saw what was toward, and allowed us to get near enough to catch the precious tins, and even to take a half-filled case of "bubbly." He summoned also an orderly to help us carry the swag, so we sent him a present of a bottle and all was well. We were popular members of the Mess that night—and how good that champagne was!

Our little Mess had swollen to double its size, for the Colonel and D. B. and Hepaton had joined the chummery for company's sake, and Benham of the R.E. also became an Honorary Member. He was staying behind with a burying party to perform a necessary though gruesome task, and he made himself very useful as a foraging officer. To the tinned milk, jam, and champagne he added a leg of mutton, so "all merrie."

In the afternoons, on two or three occasions, Turkish officers paid us visits of ceremony. We took tea and smoked cigarettes together. One of them had escaped from Amara after our occupation of that town, and laughed with great enjoyment as he recounted his method of fooling, in the disguise of an Arab, the Political Officer of the moment. Another was one Haider Ali, who, brought up in America, seemed to like to "buk" with us in English. He was, of course, much in

demand as an envoy between the two armies and as an interpreter. He also censored the few letters that came through from below, and also took some of ours and promised to have them sent down the river to our people.

Emin Bey, the Commandant—a thoughtful, capable-looking man of forty or thereabouts—was courteous and reasonable enough in his treatment of us. From time to time, if he thought we wanted too much, he would tell us a long story of his unfortunate experiences amongst the Russians; how that, on the outbreak of war, he was with a military mission in the Caucasus and a guest of the Czar, but thereafter was treated with very scant ceremony and put to much inconvenience before he got home again. "I," he would say, "treat you much better than that, and you are prisoners of war!"

The sifting of the sick and wounded went on steadily, and kept us busy getting them ready to embark. Each evening the hospital ship went down with a load; each morning she returned for another. Every man, before he was allowed on board, was searched; and everything of value save his money, if he had any, was taken away from him. None of us was allowed to speak to the British doctors on the ship, nor to board her. It was a galling thing to be standing on shore within a yard or two of one's friends of the R.F., and not to be able to talk to them; for there

were a thousand things we were dying to ask and to learn from them. Abdul Kadir, the Turkish medical factotum, however, assured us that the M.O.'s still left in Kut—fourteen of us—would be exchanged and go down with the last boatload. The negotiations, he said, were not quite complete; but it would be all right, and we believed him. We exulted in our luck, stifled our qualms, and counted the hours to our release.

One day we were informed that all our kit of any military value, which we as medicals had been allowed to keep and which we expected to take down with us, was to be given up "in exchange for a receipt by the Turkish Government." Tents, saddlery, pistols, field-glasses, surgical instruments, and our swords were piled together and handed over, but we got no receipt. How we wished we had smashed everything up, especially our swords! But it was too late, and they wolfed the lot. However, our eyes were on the "last boat," and on the evening of about the eighth day we were told to be ready to embark the next morning, and to have our kits ready on the bank by nine.

Needless to say we were there in time, sitting on our boxes, eager to catch sight of the boat as she came round the bend. But an hour passed and no boat appeared.

The factotum got anxious, and said he would send us down on a barge, and proceeded to get one. Another hour passed, but just as our spirits had sunk about down to our boots the hospital ship appeared. No yacht ever looked so fair or liner so desirable; on she came, and our spirits rose to par again. She came into the shore and tied up, and we prepared to go aboard, but, alas! we had not done with disappointment. Some one handed a note to Abdul Kadir, who turned to us with a white face. "Our General at the front line has not received an answer about you from the British Headquarters. I am very sorry, but you will not be able to be exchanged at present, but will have to go to Baghdad!" This was really a bolt from the blue, and it left us stunned. Life held no further bitterness for us; we had touched bedrock of disappointment. Wearily we gathered our men together, once more shouldered our baggage, and, disconsolate, returned to our lodging.

XVI.

On May 9th we sailed for Baghdad on a finely built river steamer called the *Khalifa*. Whilst I was strolling about waiting to embark, a good-looking German sailor accosted

me in very good English. He belonged to the *Goeben*, and was, he informed me, a petty officer, and in civil life an electrician in Hamburg.

"I'm sorry," he said, "to see

your fellows going away into captivity. I don't suppose ten per cent of them will ever see their homes again." I asked him what he meant, and he answered with a shrug of his shoulders that they would have a bad time. "Our Germans who go to England as prisoners will, we know, be well cared for and will get back again, and so will your English who go to Germany, but those who go to the Turks—no, perhaps not so many as ten in a hundred will ever get back!"

This was not in any way cheering, but I thought he was exaggerating. Still, I wondered how much truth there was in his remarks; he had travelled down from Gallipoli, and knew what the route was like and the Turkish manner of doing it. Many a time since I have thought of what he said, apparently in all sincerity, and I fear for the truth of his prophecy!

Only four or five of us, including pessimistic Horace and Lancelot, with certain of our hospital personnel, travelled by the *Khalifa*; the rest of the disappointed fourteen, with their men and all the sick and wounded who remained unexchanged in Kut, were put on board another ship. I believe it was the old *Julnar*, the upper deck of which was devoid of awning. This was a serious matter for them, for the sun was now fiercely hot after 10 A.M. So we of the *Khalifa* scored heavily, for we had no sick on board, and took only four days to reach Baghdad, whereas the others

on the *Julnar* had a bad time, and took ten.

Moreover, our ship's doctor, Hassan Bey, made himself agreeable; and presently, as we were sitting about on our kit on the lower deck, the Commandant, Emin, came along and inquired if accommodation had been provided for us. On our replying in the negative, he said he would clear the upper deck at once and make room. Within an hour or two this was done. A round dozen or so of German officers were removed to one end inside a railing, and the rest of the large roomy deck cleared of Arabs and other impedimenta.

Soon we were invited to come up and doss down where we liked. As we were doing so one of the Germans came across and politely suggested that we had chosen a bad place, and that we should be more comfortable on the other side, since we were likely to be crowded out by Arabs where we were. We thanked him and moved, and were glad later on that we had done so. We spoke a few words with the Germans from time to time, though our relations were always marked by more reserve than cordiality, whereas with the Turks we were friendly enough. One of the Germans had been a business man in Baghdad for the past two or three years, and spoke appreciatively of the many Englishmen he had known and mixed with there during that time.

The Turkish Commandant

and his Staff came on board, and took up their quarters well forward on the same deck, and we then cast off and said good-bye to Kut. We hoped we should soon see it again on a return journey, for we had been given to understand that we should be exchanged before long.

At Shamran we stopped to take on board practically all the officers of the old Vith Division, or those that were left of them, and every square yard of deck was soon occupied.

There had been a big camp here, but the men had been marched on, save the sick, and those whom even the Turks considered unfit for the journey. They had revised the "unfit" list of our M.O.'s, and reduced them to a minimum, with the result that they had to carry hundreds up by boat from the first stage at Baghela. Going ashore at Shamran I came across the Colonel, and "Mac" and Canning, and one or two more who were in charge of the sick there. They said a good many of our fellows had died, but that things were now improving. Living in the open, with plenty of food, had done wonders for them, and they were looking nearly well again. We got a few of their surplus stores, and resumed our voyage. The journey to Baghdad was got through without incident, and comfortably enough, save that we were packed like sardines. Each morning and evening, however, the C.O. agreed to tie up at the bank

for half an hour or so, to give us an opportunity of stretching our legs, and of washing and bathing, which was a great boon. The country was as flat as ever, mostly desert, and desperately uninteresting. Here and there we passed an Arab village, the denizens of which would come out and gape at us, and cheer and extol the Turks with their haul of prisoners. Linked arm in arm, all the males of the place would run or dance in line, keeping pace with the ship, yelling or chanting a song of triumph, and blazing off any old muskets or pistols they happened to possess. But the Turks only smiled, called them "canaille," and shrugged their shoulders.

At Baghela we passed the other boat with the sick on board. She was tying up there to take on several hundreds of sick men of ours who had fallen out on the march up from Kut. We heard afterwards that she couldn't take them all, but she filled herself up to her utmost capacity, and we thanked our stars that we were not travelling in her, for the discomfort on board her was extreme, and several deaths occurred. There were so many delays, due to sand-banks and lack of fuel, that the food gave out, and altogether they all passed through a horrible ten days. About half-way to Baghdad we passed Azizieh, on the left bank, and those who had spent many hot weeks in that miserable mud village the October before shuddered at the remembrance of them.

The third day we passed Laj, and soon afterwards came in sight of the wonderful old arch of Ctesiphon, and the scene of the battle of six months before. We could see the famous arch for miles before we got there; it looked like a big brown haystack or an airship-shed in the distance, but assumed noble proportions as we neared it. Ctesiphon, as every one knows, was a great and magnificent city at one time under the Parthian kings, who made it their winter residence.

Under the early Sassanian monarchs it was a place of great importance, but of course it was plundered by the Arabs in the seventh century. It arose after the decay of Seleucia, the great Greek capital, which was situated opposite it on the right bank.

The Arch—which comprises the façade and the huge vaulted hall of a palace—is an enormous thing, and gives one some idea of what must have been the glory of the city that could produce it. It measures, they say, over 120 feet high, 160 odd wide, and 180 long. Apart from this wonderful arch, there is little to suggest that here once flourished a great city—nothing but a few low mounds and a long wall (the “high wall” of the battle of Ctesiphon), and the tomb near by of Suleiman Pâk. What remains looks horribly lonely and desolate—“dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”; how literally true that seems in this country!

Soon after leaving Ctesiphon we passed the mouth of the Diala river, which joins the Tigris eight or nine miles from Baghdad, and on the banks of which the Turks had prepared a position to retire on after Ctesiphon, but never needed it. Beyond this the banks were lined with date-groves and gardens—we were approaching the magic city.

Presently we came to isolated river-side houses, and then more, until finally they were almost continuous, now a row of mean dwellings, now a more pretentious mansion.

At last a vista of good-looking villas, with upper stories overhanging the river, nestling in their gardens of palms, orange, vine, and fig trees, lining both banks, with the broad smooth river between, opened out before us; minarets and domes we could see reflecting the morning sunshine. The prospect was a pleasing one, and, under the circumstances of our arrival, one to be remembered. Very many of the larger houses flew the red crescent flag, and on their balconies were groups of sick soldiers, dressed in their loose red or blue cotton gowns, with small caps of the same material—Baghdad seemed to be mostly hospital. At last, just as we came in sight of the bridge of boats, we slowed down opposite the largest and most imposing building we had yet seen, and which we recognised as the British Consulate, and there we stopped and prepared to disembark.

XVII.

It was an unkind fate that landed us at the British Consulate—now no longer a Consulate, but a hospital. It is a fine new building, and we felt that for once the dignity of Britain had been upheld by a structure fitting her prestige.

The order came for all officers to disembark—officers only, none of other ranks, and no baggage. This was soon done, and we stepped ashore, wondering if we should ever see our kit again. We were lined up in order of seniority, and, a few minutes later, to our surprise and not a little amusement, were marched off, very slowly, at a most funereal pace, into the town, headed by the senior Colonel and tailed by the junior Jemadar. We lacked but reversed muskets to complete the illusion that we were following our own funeral. What an interminable march that was! At two miles an hour or less we slowly wound our way along the streets, which were lined by a gaping populace and kept clear by the attendant military.

From the first-floor windows many a fair face studied with interest the captured Anglais, and some of them were pretty enough with their fair skins and plaits of glossy black hair. But the people said never a word, and their silence in the sunshine intensified the solemn nature of the proceeding. We saw it had to be got through, so we smoked a cigarette and

took stock of the town and its storks.

It was very hot, and no one was sorry when we at length reached the cool shade of the vaulted bazars in the middle of the city. Half a mile of these, and we emerged once more into the fierce sunlight, passed the Infantry Barracks, and marched out of the city by the north gate; down a slope on the Meidan, past a lake of flood water, and so at long last to the Cavalry Barracks and our destination, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from our starting-point.

Hungry and thirsty, we were told there would be breakfast at noon, but it was nearer three o'clock when we got it—a mess of thin soup, vegetables, and some eggs, and then it was a scramble.

Another meal was prepared for us at about seven o'clock in the evening, by the contractor to whom the job of feeding us had been handed over, and we ate it at small tables set in the open in the Barrack square. We paid a "mejidieh" a day (about 3s. 8d.) for our "board."

The accommodation in the barracks was limited, and we lay on the floor in rows, cheek by jowl with each other; but some of us were wise enough to sleep on the roof at night, and so escape the sandflies that came out in thousands down below.

The next day a few of us got out for a walk accompanied by

a guard. Some went to see the American Consul; we of the medical persuasion went to the Central Military Hospital to look up friend Abdul Kadir. Him we found in his bacteriological laboratory looking lovingly down a microscope, which was part of a very complete and workmanlike field-service Bacteriological outfit of Austrian make. He introduced us to the Commandant and to another physician, gave us coffee and cigarettes, and then he showed us over the place. He took us in to see some British officers and men who had been captured from Aylmer's Force. The officers were in a small ward which was clean and bright, and which they shared with some Turks. There were Tranquil with a broken thigh, Watson, and Gasson the flying man; they all looked pretty bad. They said the Turks treated them well, but they were full of gratitude to some French Sisters of Mercy who frequently visited them, bringing them fruit and jam and other delicacies from their Convent. The men were in a larger general ward, and seemed to be treated in the same way as the Turkish soldiers, and to be more or less contented. The hospital appeared to be clean and well kept; it is a large building arranged around an extensive quadrangle or garden, full of orange trees, vines, figs, and the like, amongst which are cut paths in all directions. Convalescents were wandering about amongst the trees and flowers

enjoying the fresh air and gentle exercise.

Abdul Kadir informed us that four out of the five of our own particular party were to remain in Baghdad to look after the sick and wounded; the fifth would accompany the rest of the officers going north.

For four days we remained in the Cavalry Barracks. One evening somebody got up an impromptu concert which went on unmolested for some time, until in the middle of "Glorious Devon" or "Widdicombe Fair"—I forget which—the little Turkish officer who had been left in charge of us for the night suddenly conceived the idea that we were singing Russian Turcophobe songs, and ordered a cessation of the proceedings. This annoyed our senior, Colonel D—, who strongly objected to doing any such thing, and ordered the artists of the moment to continue.

There ensued, therefore, a most lively altercation for twenty minutes, conducted in a mixture of French and English by the Colonel and an interpreting Staff officer on the one hand, and by the Turk and his assistant on the other. Things began to look awkward, and it seemed there would be a row, but explanations finally prevailed and the concert continued.

At the end of four days we were suddenly ordered to pack up and move off to the station, with not more than 60 kilos of stuff for a Field officer and not more than 30 for one below

that rank. The result was a hasty scrapping of kit, and a crowd of Jewish and Arab scallywag merchants who swarmed amongst us reaped a rich harvest. The commandant of the "Place" had received no orders about the medicals, but in the nick of time we got hold of Abdul Kadir, who arranged matters, and four of us—for Lancelot had tossed with Horace for a place, and lost—stayed behind with three or four other officers who were too ill to move. The rest of them lined up and started on their journey into the unknown. With a lump in our throat we watched them move off to the station, and wondered how many of them we should ever see again. The same evening we who were left, and the sick officers, were taken off by our friend Abdul,—the sick to be installed in Turkish hospitals, ourselves to be shown new quarters. Our kit and servants followed in carts. Two of these carts were full of stuff belonging to officers who had gone north. The American Consul had promised to look after any superfluous kit they could send him. A Turkish guard was told off to go with it, and we did our best to keep an eye on it, but it never rolled up, and our inquiries the next day only elicited shrugs of the shoulders. To our surprise, we ourselves, instead of being deposited at once in our new abode, were taken along to a restaurant, where on a balcony overlooking the Tigris we were presented to the Médecin-en-chef and other

M.O.'s, and then dined by them as their guests.

Fifty or sixty other officers were dining there—Germans, Turks, Arabs, Austrians, and a Swede or two.

The Turks were attentive hosts, and the scene under such novel conditions was an interesting one. At its conclusion the Médecin-en-chef of the group of hospitals to which we were to belong, conducted us through what appeared to be a maze of mediæval alleys by the light of a candle-lamp to our lodging, where we were glad to find our orderlies already installed.

The next morning we endeavoured to go out to the restaurant for breakfast, as we had been informed we might do, but to our chagrin we found that we were in the hands of a jailor who by no means agreed to our going. Persuasion and argument were equally useless with the stupid old Arab "dug-out" who was now our "director," and all we could get out of him was permission for a servant to go out and purchase food, since he offered us none himself. For two days we couldn't get out of the place, and then the restriction was as suddenly removed as it had been imposed. The house we were in was fitted up as a hospital, filled with rough wooden beds covered with mattresses, and ready for our sick when they should arrive, but it boasted no drugs or instruments, which we had to indent for in the smallest quantities when required. It belonged

to the *École des Sœurs*—the French Dominican Sisters, whose convent was close by, and whose headquarters establishment is at Tours. Our house was a two-storied building with a flat roof, and a central courtyard about 25 feet square, out of which opened the rooms of the basement and a staircase up to the verandahed first floor. The lower rooms or “serdabs” were below the level of the courtyard—three steps down; they are to be found in all Baghdad houses, and are used in the hot weather for living in. Fresh air is conducted down to them by long chimneys, the tops of which project above the roof in the form of a cowl facing the direction of the prevailing north wind, and they are very much cooler than the upper rooms.

The house-top slightly overhangs the rest of the building, with the result that it nearly touches those of other houses. These, when we went up in the evening to take the air, we found occupied by a crowd of Baghdadis—Jews, Chaldeans, Syrians,—all Christians, and all smiling all over at us, offering us fruit and cigarettes, and eager to greet us with a “Good morning, howwaryou?”

We found ourselves, in effect, living in the middle of the Christian quarter, the inhabitants of which spared no pains, when the Turks were not looking, to impress on us their whole-hearted sympathy with the Allied cause. Most of the men spoke French; a good many of them who had been

employed in the offices of the English firms, also English; the women, with one or two exceptions, only Arabic.

The Christian quarter is of very considerable extent, and contains a large number of well-built and commodious houses belonging to well-to-do people, who, I should think, monopolise the commercial business of the city.

There are practically no streets worth the name through it, but only narrow alleys which wind about in all directions. As the upper stories generally overhang the lower, the tops of the houses approximate to each other, so that but little sunlight finds its way into the lanes.

They reminded one of prints of Old London before the great fire. Each house boasts a heavy wooden door with a large brass knocker thereon, and as there are no external windows on the ground floor, each forms a sort of self-contained stronghold. The necessary air space is got in the courtyard inside and, of course, on the roof, which takes the place of a garden. This type of house is doubtless a very necessary one, where not only is space limited but where a citizen holding fast to one faith is liable at short notice to be butchered by those holding another.

The important part religion plays in the daily life of the people in this part of the world was often brought home to one in the most casual of remarks. One would ask a man who he was, and would inevitably get

the answer, "I'm a Christian," or "I'm a Mussulman," as the case might be. "Who is he?" "Oh, he's a Mussulman!" Never would the man's name or occupation be given, but always the central fact of his existence—so it seemed—his religion! The vital importance, to the individual, of a man's creed was impressed upon us again and again, and one came to realise how much a matter of life and death one's choice of a method of going to heaven might become at any moment.

They are well off for churches, and there are a couple of Bishops—a Syrian and a Chaldean—one of whom we had the pleasure of meeting. There is also a large French Convent with an establishment of thirty or forty Dominican Sisters. The Chaldean church is a large building surmounted by a dome like a miniature St Peter's, and was close to our hospital of the *École des Sœurs*. We were allowed to attend service there if we wished, and our "director" himself took some of us there to attend Mass soon after our arrival. At the service, which was similar to a Mass in Europe, all the women sat together in the fore-part of the church and the men behind.

The women dress in semi-European fashion without the hat, but each wears a sort of flowing silk robe or large cape, which is worn over the head rather like an Indian "sari." Their shoes are of the high-heeled variety, but have "up-

pers" over the fore-part of the foot only, and they are well made.

The men wear ordinary European clothing topped by the Turkish tarboosh. Very few of them were taken for military service by the Turks save as assistants in hospitals and offices, but they had to pay a heavy annual fee for their exemption, and as practically all their trade was at a standstill they were feeling the war acutely.

There are many thousands of Christians in Baghdad, including a good many Arabs, and during the whole of our stay in Baghdad, these people lost no opportunity of talking to us, when they could do so unobserved; they expressed their sorrow at our failure to reach Baghdad six months before, and hoped that it would not be long before the tables were turned.

"We are sorry to see you as prisoners. You were so close to us at Ctesiphon; we could hear the guns and were delighted to think the English were coming. But they *will* come, won't they? When will it be? in a week or two, a month, two months? They are good and kind, the English; they ought to take Baghdad," and so on. We assured them the English *would* come, perhaps in a month or two, perhaps longer, but they certainly would drive the Turk back and capture the city!

This friendliness of the Christian community was so pronounced at times as to be almost embarrassing, and we

feared to get them into trouble by talking to them too much. Our old Arab "director" interfered at times and waved us apart, but he himself was a Christian and so was none too strict.

After a couple of days we overcame his objections to our going out, and got away for a *petit déjeuner* at the Restaurant "Tigre." Horace and I revelled in the freshness of the early morning, sitting on the vine-clad balcony overhanging the great river, and it seemed good to be alive again. Now and again small row-boats would pass up or down the stream carrying Turkish or German officers, sitting under a small awning, or a "Qufa" or coracle would float downstream full to the brim with green water-melons. Three hundred yards above us lay the only boat-bridge connecting the two banks; the far bank was lined with balconied houses built on the wall at the river brink, and people could be seen in them taking their morning tea or coffee on the little verandahs. Just opposite, a gap in the row of houses was occupied by a palm garden, and to its left, above the trees, could be seen the high water tower belonging to the German railway terminus.

The restaurant proprietor was all for the "Entente"; though he had lived all his life in Baghdad, he looked more Italian than anything else. When no one was near he would come and talk to us freely, but when Germans were present he would be content

with a few "asides." He would take any sort of money from us, he said, or none at all if we were short, and he appeared to tolerate with difficulty his German patrons. Later on, when all restrictions on our movements were removed, we got into the habit of dining there twice a week, besides an occasional breakfast. Leaving the restaurant we explored the Bazars, and as we were walking therein we came across a large crowd, which we discovered was watching the marching into the city of our Indian troops, who had just arrived. They marched by, each carrying a small bundle of kit. Despite their fatigue, they came in well and at a good pace, and their faces were expressionless, or melancholic; doubtless it was "Kismet." But in a few moments I turned away; it was too sad to see those splendid fellows in the hands of the Philistines!

The main Bazars are two or three covered-in streets, with low vaulted roofs, running parallel to the river, in the middle of the city,—they are more like tunnels than anything else, with cubicles on each side for shops. They are just wide enough for two fiacres to pass each other, and are smelly and stuffy. At night, with dirty lamps placed at rare intervals on the walls, and deserted save for a watchman or two, they are weird and ghostly places, like a cathedral crypt.

The goldsmiths' and silversmiths' Bazars form a series

or rather maze of the tiniest little alleys, in which it is easy to get lost. In them we saw very little good work; nearly all of it was cheap and badly made jewellery, such as one saw worn by the Arab women, but perhaps their best stuff was hidden away. In Baghdad as a city we were vastly disappointed; it has no imposing buildings save its various barracks, and the town is very commonplace.

Our freedom was short-lived, for we were soon shut up again for another day or two, after which the other boat with the sick and wounded arrived, and we soon had work to do.

The "École des Sœurs" house and another were filled up, and some hundreds more were dumped down on a bare piece of land near the station, with Trixie and others to look after them. It was a bad place. Save for a few bits of rush matting and a tent or two, there was no protection for the men from the sun, which by now was appallingly hot in the middle of the day; no sanitation, and insufficient water. Here they remained for two or three weeks, but every few days those thought fit enough were sifted out and sent up country in batches, sometimes accompanied by a medical officer, and sometimes without.

The American Consul, Mr Brissl, visited this camp almost daily, and worked hard to ameliorate the dreadful conditions our men were living in there. He supplied money; he bought sheep for them;

had beds made for the sick, and helped in a hundred ways. He looked after the cemetery, and arranged for the Christian burial of those who died. He was indefatigable all through that hot summer, frequently visited us to talk things over with the Colonel, lent us books, and did us all good by his cheery presence. He and Trixie became great friends, and got through a lot of work in connection with the camp. We owed him much.

As beds became vacant in the hospitals the number of sick in the camp was gradually reduced, and the whole camp was later on removed to a much more satisfactory and shady site near the river, where the men could bathe and laze beneath the palms.

A few days later six of us were moved out of the "École" and quartered in the Artillery Barracks—sometimes called the Citadel—near the North Gate, and abutting on the old and ruined wall of the city, where we were soon joined by the Colonel, who had at last arrived from Shamran. Here we had an upper room, which was desperately hot in the daytime and full of sandflies at night. It overlooked the great barrack square, where the training of small bodies of men in gun drill, and of cadets in sword practice, was constantly going on. The barracks are built around three sides of this square, whilst on the fourth or river side are workshops and two or three magazines. We occupied rooms just to the left of the main gate as you go

in, and between us and the nearest magazine at the corner, some fifty yards away, the barracks were used as a hospital, full of sick and wounded Turks. Soon after we got there the ground floor of this part was handed over to us for a hospital, which we filled up with men from the camp. From here two of us were told off to look after a lot of British and Indian men who were accommodated in a large hospital run by the Turkish Red Crescent Society. They were mostly men who belonged to the relief force, and had been prisoners for various periods from three weeks to as many months.

They were very glad to see us and to be treated by their own doctors. Our coming, they told us presently, made a great difference to the attitude of the Turkish orderlies towards them; for whereas before our arrival some of the orderlies were inclined to knock our men about a good deal, and to be brutal on occasion, they now showed them much more consideration.

They had a fair amount of food: milk and sour milk, or "lait caillé," a popular morning dish in Baghdad, rice, bread, and a vegetable stew with a trace of meat in it. Most of them missed the meat, of which they got scarcely any, but a good many got to like the diet. The brown bread was coarse and a little sour, and several of the sick men couldn't digest it, so we always purchased some loaves of white bread on our way to hospital for them, and generally also

some extra cigarettes. Both these little luxuries they appreciated very much, and they made them feel they were being looked after.

The chief surgeon of this hospital was one Kanin Bey, who before the war had been the "civil surgeon" of Baghdad, and still looked after the large municipal hospital on the other side of the river, which also took in many wounded.

He was thus acquainted with the members of the British colony in peace time. He was an intelligent Turk, had travelled a good deal, and had received his medical education in Paris; he was under no illusions regarding the position of Turkey, and saw that whichever way the war went she would gain nothing. He was a good surgeon, easily the best of the few I saw. Most of them seemed unsympathetic in their manner to their patients, and rough in their treatment and work generally. The hospital storekeeper was a horse-dealer, who spent much of his time in Bombay and was a constant visitor to the Poona races; but now his business had gone, and he divided his time between his store cupboards and his hubble-bubble!

The hospital boasted a Turkish bath, which we were invited to use whenever we liked, and we were able to order an occasional bath for our patients, who very much appreciated it. The attendant, Abdullah, was a friendly old Arab, whose ministrations were always most grateful and comforting. A most atrocious Turkish brass

band played here about twice a week, but it cheered the men up a bit; it went round to most or all of the hospitals in town, played for a few minutes and then moved on. Its headquarters seemed to be the Infantry Barracks or the neighbouring "Serai," where all the army officers were, and it was here that it played the gems of its limited repertoire.

We soon settled down to a sort of dull daily routine which tried our nerves and our patience, accompanied as it was for some time by irritating restrictions on our movements. Week after week we were promised "exchange soon," but as often were disappointed. The weather was terribly hot; we worked from an early hour till about midday as a rule, and then "existed" from one to five in our room in the scantiest of attire and prayed for sundown. Rumours of the tragic fate of large numbers of our men who were overcome by the heat on the marches up beyond the railhead at Samara reached us, and two of our number were despatched up the line to help.

General Mellis, who had remained in Baghdad sick for two or three weeks, recovered and departed north with his staff, and with Gaspard as medical attendant.

Of news we got little that we could trust. From the Christian side the most optimistic rumours reached us, whilst in the only paper that Baghdad boasted, printed in French and Arabic, we saw the description of events ac-

cording to the German side. From the one we heard that Lord Kitchener had come out to Busra; from the other, a few days later, we heard that he had been drowned. For long, of course, we believed neither, till the very insistence of the latter forced itself into our minds and we feared it must be true. At the restaurant and elsewhere we often conversed with Turks. The fall of Erzerum they would never acknowledge, but from a doctor who was there I heard something of the sufferings they went through. Typhus raged there apparently, and they must have lost thousands of men; for of doctors alone, according to my informant, they lost a hundred, he himself only just recovering. One interesting Turk was a most enthusiastic officer in the Turkish Mission to Persia. His eyes sparkled as he spoke of what they meant to do there. "Persia is ours," he would say, "and so is India by rights, for she is Mussulman and should be ruled by Constantinople, and one day we shall get her." He ignored the millions of Hindus, or knew little about them, and was quite persuaded that they would brush aside the British resistance. He departed for Persia a few days afterwards, and I have often wondered what has happened to him since and how he has taken the breaking of his dream.

Their views on the Armenian massacres were amusing. I asked one of them how he justified their appalling treatment

of these people. "Why do you butcher them?" I said. In-
genuously he replied, "But of
course we kill them; they are
revolutionaries and anarchists
and are always giving us
trouble; the only way, natur-
ally, is to exterminate them.
Besides, what are *you* doing in
Ireland?" Of Germans there
were a fair number in Bagh-
dad,—perhaps a hundred or so
officers and half a battalion of
pioneers, also half a dozen
nursing sisters, and a few Aus-
trians. Many of them and of
the Turkish officers wore the
Gallipoli campaign ribbon, and
not a few had the Iron Cross.
The Germans kept very much
to themselves, and it was a
rare thing to see Turks and
Germans chatting together.
The Turks themselves, strange-
ly enough, did not hesitate to
intimate to us their dislike of
the Teuton. A short time be-
fore we left most of the Ger-
mans disappeared; they had,
it was said, gone off to Persia.

One day, just as we had
shut ourselves up to get
through the heat of the day,
a loud explosion was heard.
It sounded like another mid-
day gun, but we lost no
time in going outside to
investigate. Smoke was issu-
ing from the magazine at
the corner, and within a
minute or so another bang,
and another larger irruption
of smoke and dust occurred.
And now we heard the rattle
of small - arms ammunition;
explosion followed explosion in
increasing violence until it
sounded like a furious battle
going on within a few yards

of us. We hastily dressed,
told our men to pack up, and
went outside and down the
steps to the hospital to get
the men clear. A Turk
rushed in and told us all to
clear out as fast as we could.
Then came the biggest explo-
sion of all, which nearly
brought the place down, and
the end of the barraeks nearest
the magazine began to burn
merrily. There was a wild
stampede of the Turkish sick
and wounded from the upper
rooms down the steps and out
by the gate. Bits of shell,
shrapnel, twisted muskets, and
débris of all sorts were rain-
ing down on to the roof
and in the barrack square.
Hell seemed let loose, and
shells and small - arm stuff
continued to burst in every
direction for another exciting
half-hour. One shell landed
in the hospital on the other
side of the river, and there
were several casualties in the
town. A Turkish sergeant ran
round to a mosque a quarter
of a mile away, had it opened,
and told us to take up our
quarters therein for the time
being; and a very hot after-
noon we spent in moving all
our patients and kit thither.
As was not surprising, a
couple of poor fellows who
were very ill succumbed to
the exertion of moving; and
for two days we camped out
in the churchyard in a very
uncomfortable condition. But
on the third day they placed
another house at our disposal
for our personnel and sick,
and ourselves they put once
more in our old quarters in

the Cavalry Barracks in the "maidan." Here we were more comfortable, though it was extremely hot,—the thermometer once or twice reached 114° in our room; but there was a good big flat roof, and the cool nights made up for a lot. There were a good many Turkish cavalry officers quartered there, and we soon got to know them, and even on occasion rode out with them. The commandant, a *bimbashi*, a swashbuckling soldier with fifteen years' campaigning to his credit, was a very good fellow, and treated us uncommonly well; "whilst we are actually fighting you," he would say, "it is *à l'outrance*, but the fight once decided and you in our hands, you are our guests; I treat you as my own officers."

From the roof of the barracks we had a very good view of the country round: two main roads passed by it,—one along by the river to Kazimin and Mosul; the other, merely a track over the desert, led away north-eastwards to Khanikin and Kermanshah. Along the latter we constantly saw troops and munitions pass on their way to meet the Russians. One day, for instance, forty motor-lorries from Germany arrived in Baghdad from the North, and passed by us on their way to Khanikin. The Turks were sending every available man to push the Bear back, for the Russians got very near at one time, within a few miles, and one felt the uneasiness and subdued excitement in the city.

Our chief consolation in life at this time was the abundance of fruit and vegetables that were obtainable in Baghdad. The oranges were over, but there was a profusion of every other kind of fruit: nectarins, grapes, apples, plums, figs, melons, and pears grew in plenty, and were to be had in the markets.

Otherwise life was none too pleasing, and we sometimes envied the fellows who had gone north into a cooler climate, for our exchange seemed to come no nearer, and we began to give it up as a bad job. Slowly the numbers of our men decreased; some died, and some were discharged fit for the journey to Mosul. We had great difficulty in fitting out the latter, for most of them had little or nothing in the way of clothes, or of such necessary equipment as water-bottles and canteens. Several of them had been stripped on the battlefield and had arrived in hospital in nothing but a shirt. But we got hold of the kits of deceased men after considerable argument, and by the addition of small purchases of shoes or cooking pots managed to fix up most of them fairly satisfactorily, and to give them a few piastres to go on with. The American Red Cross people cheered us mightily one day by sending T£3 to each British officer, and T£1 to each British soldier who was a prisoner in Baghdad. We appreciated this most highly (notwithstanding the fact that the Turks paid us in paper which was worth about three-fifths

of its face value), and were touched by the kindly thought of the society which sent us help from their friendly country 10,000 miles away.

But all things come to an end sooner or later, and our imprisonment was no exception to the rule. One day, when we had just about given up all hope of getting away, the news came that ten out of the eleven doctors in Baghdad were to be exchanged; the eleventh, the Colonel, was to stay behind as a hostage against the return of an important Turkish doctor. But still better things were in store for us, for the Colonel made further inquiries, and, thanks to Brissl and Khalil Pasha, the order was amended, with the result that eleven doctors (including three sick), eleven combatant officers who were in hospital, and three hundred odd sick men, were now told to go. It was almost too good to be true, and we trembled lest something should go wrong and upset all arrangements; but nothing did, and on August 8th we embarked on the old *Khalifa* once more, had it all to ourselves, and weighed anchor for Kut. A goodly number of sick, together with three medicos, including Horace, Pearson, and Clifford, were also brought down from Samarah, and we thought they were to be released with us; but just before we started a Turkish deputation came on board, re-examined the men, and picked out fifty whom they considered too fit to be exchanged, so these poor devils were again disembarked and

sent back to camp with the three M.O.'s. For those poor men this last act of cruel disappointment must have been almost too much to bear. We were very sick about it, but could not prevent it.

A splendid bit of "eye-wash" on the part of the Turks was perpetrated just before we left. To our surprise and amusement they brought on board a lot of new boots, with which they fitted every man who had none or no good ones, just to show our people down below how well they looked after their prisoners—whilst during the whole time of our stay in Baghdad we could not get boots out of them for love or money for the men who had to march up country, and in several instances men were despatched on their travels without. When we remonstrated with them, they would say that their own men often went without too, which was true enough, but they were doubtless used to it.

We started away at last and dropped down the stream, but we hadn't got clear of the suburbs before we stuck on a sandbank for some hours. We were in a fever of impatience to get off again, for we were desperately afraid that the Turks would change their minds and recall us before we got well away.

However, nothing happened, and we pursued our way. It took us seven days to do the two days' journey to Kut. The river was low, and we investigated the adhesive power

of every submerged mud flat in that hundred miles of tortuous waterway. The sense of approaching freedom and the fresh air of the desert put new life into us, and despite the meagre diet of rice and vegetables we put on weight. At length we reached Shamran and tied up at the left bank, close to a Turkish hospital camp and within sight of old Kut and its minaret once more.

Here we quite expected to wait a day or two whilst they arranged our transfer, but no one was prepared for another three weeks of suspense on board that beastly boat.

But there we stayed day after day, counting the hours, playing bridge, watching British aeroplanes sail over us once more as of old in Kut, wondering what the delay was about, and being unutterably bored. We never got off that boat for a solid month; we fed on rice and beans and lady's fingers, bread and soup, twice a day; soup and beans and rice—dates and eggs when we could get them—until we began to dread the sight of those piled-up plates of greasy rice.

Haider Bey came to see us every few days, and sometimes some doctors of our acquaintance or a flying man or two. Haider seemed invariably to tell us that the exchange was practically fixed up, but that he could not get the final answer—to something—from our people down below. What that something was we could only guess; they were, we felt sure, trying to drive too hard

a bargain with General Maude. Whatever it was, we were convinced we could never count ourselves safe until we actually set foot on British ship or soil; for by now we knew our Turk, and knew that words are nothing to him save a vehicle for fooling or soothing the man he is dealing with. Truth in the abstract does not exist for him. One day Haider and his friends brought us an ice machine, with a great show of "doing us well," but the ice machine was a "frost"; it would not work, and I am quite convinced that they knew it would not before they took the trouble to have a couple of hundredweight of useless glass and iron carted along to our saloon!

But the negotiations did come to an end; steam was got up once more one night. We were given strict orders to arise next morning at three o'clock—we were all sleeping on deck—and to remain in our cabins thereafter; we were ordered to give up all gold we might possess, and all our kit was inspected and our papers and letters examined. All night long, it seemed, they were putting up canvas screens all around the decks, rendering opaque all cabin windows, and hermetically sealing them, so that the place became like an oven. Sure enough at 4.30 A.M. we started on our last jaunt, and moved off down the stream. The plunging and cranking of those noisy ship's engines was the sweetest music I have ever heard. We were to meet a British Hos-

pital ship near Megasis, so they said. Soon we were slipping past Kut, and just got a peep at its ruined front as we went by, and shortly afterwards passed the point on the right bank to which our army had then advanced. Thence for miles we sailed through a no man's land between the British lines on the right bank and the enemy's lines on the left,—a most interesting lane to pass along. All was deadlly still—hostilities were in abeyance for our journey through; here and there we saw a head or two on one or other side, till at length we passed Megasis and saw, with a joy that words will not describe, a little two-decked sternwheeler approaching us and flying the Red Cross flag. That little ship, canvas-covered, hideous though it was, was symbolic of all that makes life possible,—of Home, and Love, and Beauty; of the might and majesty of the British Raj; of liberty to come and go; it spelt "freedom" and the thought of "freedom." The

knowledge that it was all over at last, that we were to be free men once more, was almost too great for words; it left us dumb.

In a remarkably short space of time we were anchored alongside each other. The exchanged Turks were the first to be passed over, and they were soon all aboard the *Khalifa*, whilst we lost no time in setting foot on the dear old *Sikkim*. We shook hands heartily with Haider and Dr Hassan, the same ship's doctor we had gone up with four months before, and from the bridge of the *Sikkim* waved them a cheery good-bye. As the good ships separated, and the Turks went "up" and we went "down," we turned with a sigh of contentment into the little saloon, looked at the white cloth and the marmalade, and smelt the bacon and eggs; whilst Trixie, voicing the sentiments of us all, sat himself down at the laden board, and with knife in one hand and fork in the other, exclaimed, "Gad! I've been waitin' for this for a y-e-a-r!"

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ENSIGN.

BY VEDETTE.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM now on, the shadows of the events that stood before began to be more sharply defined. As the Brigade marched out of M—— behind the Drums on a dull grey morning, there were many besides our Ensign there who felt that the moment was close at hand when they would take their places in the battle-line of the Somme. Indeed, hardly had the men got shaken down in their new quarters—a bivouac on a bare and dirty hillside amidst rolling downs covered, as far as the eye could see, with camps and horse-lines and abandoned trenches,—than a message arrived—

“The Battalion is on ten minutes’ notice!”

Now they were on the very fringe of the fight. The bivouac was within the zone of “the heavies.” All that day, with a blinding flash of green flame, a sickly burst of yellow smoke, and a ponderous roar, the big guns gave tongue from their positions among the downs. All that day, down the white road running through the ruined village on the fringe of the bivouac, snorted and rattled and tramped the vast outgoing traffic of the battle-field. Motor ambulances whirled by in a constant stream, slowing up at the end of the village, where in cavernous dug-outs

white-robed surgeons toiled over the human *débris* of the fight. Motor-lorries fetching shells, ammunition limbers and water-carts going down to be filled, baggage carts—all through the morning and afternoon our Ensign saw them bumping slowly down the hill in the dust.

Between the gaps in the traffic, marching in a dense white haze, came the remnants of the battalions which had just written *Ginchy* in letters of blood upon their colours. Our Ensign had seen that splendid Irish Division marching into action less than a week before, with pipes skirling out the old Irish airs and green flags waving, a jaunty, defiant, deathless band. Not a whit less jaunty, not a whit less defiant, though the Reaper had been busy in their ranks, our Ensign saw them again to-day, slow-footed and mud-stained, dirty and unshaven, yet marching with the gait of victors.

Somewhere down the road a cry rang out—

“’Tis the Dubs.!”

In an instant the road was overflowing with Irish Guardsmen, swarming forward in the dust-clouds raised by the Dublin Fusiliers in their passage.

“Jasus! ’tis the Micks!”

rang out a voice from the midst of the column.

Cheery salutations were exchanged. Here and there a brown hand stretched out from the roadside grasped a muddy one thrust forward from the ranks of marching men in a warm clasp. Chaff was freely bandied about as the Irishmen trudged past, "Dubs." and Munsters and Connaughts and the rest.

"So they didn't get yez this time, Micky, me boy!" shouted a droll Irish voice from the roadside.

"True for you, Patsy, true for you!" flashed back the answer from the ranks. "I'll be meetin' yez in Ould Dublin yet!"

"Begob! ye'll have to get a move on yez, the Micks," drawled out a rich brogue from the road, "if ye want to find anny of the Gerboys left! We didn't lave manny of thim for yez! Didn't we an' the Dubs. knock hell's own blazes out of thim?"

There was a roar of laughter and cheers, then brogue and its owner were swallowed up in the dust. . . .

At tea that afternoon somebody announced that the Welsh Guards up in the front line had had a very bad shelling, and were probably coming out that night. Another battalion was to take their places, and two companies of our Ensign's battalion were to go up and replace this battalion in support. After tea our Ensign was sent for by the Commanding Officer, and told to go on ahead and reconnoitre the route for the two com-

panies as far as the Headquarters of another Guards' Brigade, so that they should not lose their way in the dark. From Brigade Headquarters guides would take the two companies up to the line.

It was getting dusk, and there was no time to lose. Our Ensign sent his servant to the Signallers to borrow two bicycles; and after beating the bivouac for his orderly, and failing to find him, he selected a bright lad in the company to act as orderly, and a little later the pair might have been seen pushing their bicycles through the dust up the steep road leading towards the Front.

The experiences of that night lingered long in our Ensign's memory. The road was terribly rough; and though, with the coming of evening, the traffic was less, there was still enough about to make riding in the half-light distinctly dangerous. Their way led them past miles of empty trenches, where weather-beaten wooden crosses, hung with withered flowers, remained to tell of the time when the French were holding these positions, then the front line. As they drew nearer to the Front, they passed imperceptibly from the zone of the biggest guns into the region of the lighter pieces. The guns were waking up. Now and then, as they pedalled along, a huge shell travelled over their heads, coming from their rear, "hooshing" and wailing as it sped through

the air. Now from right and now from left of them ear-splitting reports resounded.

The traffic grew heavier as they approached their destination. At the entrance to a gloomy and shattered village, so wrecked by shell fire that every house was razed, the press of vehicles and of troops going up and coming down was so great that our Ensign and his orderly had to get off and walk their bicycles. Presently all further progress was hindered; so, after waiting for a spell, our Ensign shouldered his heavy machine and struck out among the ruins to try and get round the block in the road. It was very heavy going; but at last, soaked with perspiration and breathless, our Ensign and his orderly emerged upon a fairly clear stretch of road, and pedalled off into the gathering darkness.

Fortunately the way was not difficult to find. At a cross-roads, where a mass of blackened poles sticking up against the evening sky denoted the former location of a wood, our travellers branched off to the left into a small country road.

Guns were firing everywhere now. The stench of their fumes lay heavy on the air. It was almost dark, and the green glare of their discharges lit up fitfully the struggling masses that thronged the little road. Long lines of men in single file, stooping beneath the weight of two petrol tins filled with water, slung across their shoulders; similar lines

laden with coils of wire, stakes, pickets and shovels; long columns of troops going to relieve battalions in the line; trains of mules, with tossing tails, plodding forward amid a hail of curses; ammunition carts, water-carts, . . . all were jumbled up together in that narrow way. From time to time came the low cry: "Make way! Stretcher-bearers!" and a stretcher would appear carried shoulder-high by four sweating bearers. Now and again, by the flash of the guns of a neighbouring battery, our Ensign caught a glimpse of a form, motionless, under blood-stained bandages. . . .

A few sand-bagged steps led into a narrow clearing made in the wood that ran along one side of the road. Over the steps hung the Brigade flag. The steps led up to a little kind of entrance way, where a number of officers were standing. Behind them was a heavily sand-bagged shelter, where by the guttering light of a couple of candles, the signallers stooped over their telephones.

"Toot - toot! Toot - toot! Toot-toot!"

The telephones shrilled their note clearly above the deafening crash of the guns all round. The 18-pounders were firing in salvoes now. The very sandbags shook with the noise. The signallers were shouting down their telephones. Oblivious of everything, an officer sat at the bench beside them and wrote. They were all Guards' of-

ficers in that little place. Our Ensign knew some of them. He spoke to a Coldstreamer whom he had met up in the salient, and asked him what the news was. The Coldstreamer said the Welsh Guards had had a baddish time; the Prince of Wales' Company, in particular, had suffered. He mentioned the names of several men who had been killed. They were all waiting for news of the Grenadiers: they, too, had been having a roughish handling.

An officer with red tabs turned away from a very weary-looking Scots Guards captain, and came towards our Ensign. The young man reported himself, and was told that the guides were ready to take the two companies up to the line.

Then an orderly, covered with mud, emerged from nowhere, as orderlies do, with a message.

"Ah! from the Grenadiers!" said the officer in red tabs, and bolted off towards a deep dug-out in the corner.

Our Ensign bade good-night to the Coldstreamer, and went out again into the road. A regular whirlwind bombardment was in progress. The din was ear-splitting. Every gun for miles around seemed to be firing as fast as it could be loaded.

Our Ensign found his orderly staring open-mouthed at the distant horizon, where a never-ceasing spout of white lights marked the winding line of the front trenches. The lad was very young, and he had

not been long in France. As they surveyed the black horizon together and noted the orange spurts of flame where the shells were bursting among the Verey lights, a deep auburn glare suddenly lit up the whole devastation of the landscape, and spread, upwards and outwards, in slow majesty across the night sky.

"Glory be to God, sir!" exclaimed the orderly, "what's that?"

Our Ensign shook his head wisely.

"Looks like an ammunition dump going up!" he said, but he didn't in the least know. It was an extraordinary spectacle, lasting a full minute, during which every single projection on the horizon stood out hard and black against the flaming sky. It reminded our Ensign of the backgrounds of battle scenes in the portraits of the Generals at the "Senior."

Then they started off back to the bivouac in the darkness. When they reached the main road they halted and waited for the two companies of the battalion which were marching up. Presently dark shapes loomed up in the gloom . . . the traffic was much lighter on the road now . . . and the second in command of our Ensign's battalion emerged into the bright glare of the young man's electric torch. Our Ensign indicated to the party the turning off the main road which would bring them to Brigade Headquarters, where the guides awaited them, imparted to his senior officer the news of the casualties in the

Welsh Guards, and then set off along that broken road again on his perilous homeward journey.

He crawled into his sleeping-bag at half-past one in the morning, feeling that he had earned a good night's rest.

CHAPTER X.

"The Battalion is moving off in an hour's time, sir!"

Johnson stood over our Ensign, as he lay curled up in his Wolseley valise on the floor of his tent. A canvas bucket of hot water steamed in the servant's hand. Our young man felt as though he had slept but an hour. Still, there was nothing for it, so he staggered in his pyjamas out into the sunshine, where The Beak, in similarly airy costume, was shaving himself at a little mirror propped up against the flap of his tent.

"Is it over the top for us, Beak?" queried our Ensign of his company commander.

"Don't think so yet," mumbled The Beak under the lather; "it's fatigues for to-day, anyhow, . . . carrying up stuff for the fellows in the front line. Have a good time last night?"

"Ensanguined!" retorted our young man with feeling, as he soaped his face.

Once again he was doomed to travel that dusty road towards the Front, only this time he footed it at the head of his platoon, and he found walking to be a good deal easier than cycling. About the hour of 9 A.M. he led his platoon into the wood, which had been indicated to him as their destination.

Ravaged by shell fire, seamed by trenches, gashed and blood-drenched and blackened, that wood had seen some of the fiercest fighting of the War. Not a tree lived; there was not so much as a green leaf to gladden the eye; not a bird twittered in the branches. The wood and all in it were dead, as dead as the mouldering relics of the fight that were scattered plentifully about in the yawning shell-holes, coffined by the criss-cross of fallen trunks and torn branches.

The trenches in which the two companies were to live were in places foot-deep in water, so our Ensign and Bryan, by The Beak's directions, got the men to bale them out. By the time they had got the men comfortably settled it was luncheon time. Apollo invited our Ensign to accompany him on a tour of discovery round the wood. Our Ensign shook his head decisively. He thought not, thank you! He had some idea as to what an examination of that wood might reveal. He wouldn't mind going, but he'd have his lunch first. So they agreed to go afterwards, Roderick accompanying them.

Our Ensign felt glad that he had had his lunch when he looked upon the horrors which the deeper recesses of the wood

contained. Those who have never seen a modern battlefield can have no idea of its utter and wanton *untidiness* . . . the extraordinary jumble of arms and equipment and clothing, and papers and letters and playing-cards and empty bottles and crumbling remnants of food. The trenches were literally foot-deep in equipment in some places, with here and there a shapeless, inert mass of khaki or field-grey, as lax and limp as a sack of straw, which once had been a man.

One such scene of silent tragedy gave the three an unpleasant shock. It was in a remoter corner of the wood, where the bare and blackened tree-trunks stood closer together, where a line of wrecked dug-outs and a profusion of German equipment lying about showed that the enemy had made a stand. As our Ensign and his companions plunged in and out of the fallen tree-trunks and the splintered branches lying athwart the shell-craters, Apollo, who was leading, came to a sudden halt. He stood silent with pointing finger.

At his feet, pinned securely to the ground under a massive elm which had been torn bodily from its roots by a shell, was a skeleton yet clothed in its mud-stained and mouldy field-grey. It lay on its face, prone beneath the weight of the tree, its arms outstretched in the form of a cross.

"Poor devil!" said Roderick.

"I expect it broke his back!" observed Apollo, stooping down to get a closer view of the grim figure. But our Ensign, who

was fresher than they to these sights of war, said nothing. He was thinking of the shells screaming about those wrecked dug-outs, the crash of the falling trees, the reverberating explosions, the reek of sulphur, and that solitary German felled to the earth as he bolted for shelter, and pinned down among the chaos. . . .

The Beak met them as they sauntered back to tea.

"Sorry, old boy," he said to our Ensign; "there's a fatigue to-night. It'll be you, as Bryan did the last one!"

"Sir!" quoth the Ensign in his best manner, and proceeded to note his instructions. He was to take a party of seventy men and proceed to a certain R.E. Dump, the map reference of which was given to him, there collect various material, and thence go to a certain Brigade Headquarters, where he would receive further orders.

It was dark by the time the party started off. It was a black night, without moon or stars, and, as on the previous evening, the air trembled to the ear-splitting crash of the guns. The first thing our Ensign did was to lose his way. There was plenty of traffic on the roads, but everybody was either going up or coming down, and no one seemed to have ever heard of an R.E. Dump in those parts. At last the party met a Sapper officer.

"A Dump?" he said, in reply to a question. "I believe they are forming one down there . . . about a mile

along this road." And he pointed in the direction from which the party had come.

Our Ensign groaned, then faced about and led his men in the opposite direction. After marching for about a quarter of an hour, they came to a place by the roadside where some dark figures were moving about among large indistinguishable heaps.

"Is that the R.E. Dump?" sung out our Ensign.

"Yes! Is that the Guards' fatigue party?" came back from the darkness.

"Yes!" shouted our Ensign in return, switching on the lamp fastened to his belt.

A Staff Officer stepped out of the roadside blackness into the circle of light.

"Good evening!" he said genially. "They want you to take some of this stuff up to the Welsh Guards. If you report to them, they'll tell you what to do with it. I've got a guide here. This Dump was only formed this morning, so I don't quite know what there is here; but you just go ahead, and load up the men with anything you think useful. It's all for you fellows when you go over the top . . . you will want plenty of stuff to consolidate with! You'll be all right then, will you? They shell a bit as a rule going up, but the guide will lead you off the road into the open if it gets really dangerous. Good-night!"

He vanished into the night. A Grenadier private loomed up large in the patch of light.

"Guide, sir!" he said, saluting.

Our Ensign called his senior sergeant, and with him inspected the Dump. He then divided his men into as many groups as there were heaps of different material, and got them loaded up with rolls of barbed wire, pickets, stakes, giant coils of French wire, and so forth. When they were ready the men fell in in single file, and with the guide and our Ensign at the head, the party moved off into the darkness.

It was a good two-hours' march up to the Battalion Headquarters of the Welsh Guards. The guide led them out on to a narrow track which wound its solitary way across a bare immensity of plain, in and out of shell-holes lying so thick that the lip of one crater touched the lip of the other. It was a dank, raw night, with occasional gusts of rain. The cold wind blowing down the gentle slope of the plain brought the evil odour of death from the spouting lights on the horizon where the trenches lay.

The plain was a place of death. By the roadside, in every shell-hole, the dead lay thick, British and German—now a solitary corpse, its face a white patch in the gloom, now a little knoll of men stricken down by the one shell.

The going was terrible. Under the effect of the thousands of pounds of high explosive that had worked devastation over the slope the very earth had lost its binding power and crumbled like sand

beneath the feet. The darkness was intense. The men kept stumbling under their burdens, and more than one toppled headlong into a shell-hole, often on to the silent form of its unconfined occupant. Our Ensign had learned already that in night marching the tendency of the head of a column is always to go too fast, yet though he steadied the pace down to a bare two miles an hour, the tail of the party kept on straggling behind. With the sweat running down his face, the officer spent the greater part of the march in stumbling hastily from one end of the long train to the other.

There was a good deal of sporadic shelling . . . principally "whizz-bangs," that stank most vilely in the nostrils. Most of the shells seemed to be falling about the road ahead of them, and presently the guide led the party off the track into the open, where everybody had to make the best of his way in and out of the shell-holes. At last the guide pointed to a dim tangle of bare trees on the skyline to the right.

"That's where we shall find the Welsh, sir!" he said.

He brought the party finally up to a white chalky trench, where, in the yellow light of a lantern, a group of officers were standing about the entrance to a deep and cavernous dug-out. A regimental aid-post was somewhere in the vicinity, for the sides of the trench were lined with stretchers, and the cry of "Make way for the stretcher-bearers!" kept resounding as fresh cases were

brought in. Many of the forms lying on the stretchers on parapet and paradose were field-grey. One of these figures, with a livid face, opened his eyes, as our Ensign stepped over him to reach the entrance of the dug-out, and murmured: "Ach! Mutter!"

Our Ensign reported himself to the Adjutant of the Welsh Guards, who was just emerging from the dug-out while the men of his fatigue party, their forms looming large against the skyline, sat about and chatted with the orderlies and stretcher-bearers.

"We're just going out of this," said the Welsh Guardsman; "you'd better report to the Scots Guards. The Adjutant is about somewhere."

Our young man found the Adjutant, and reported himself again.

"R.E. material, eh?" said the latter. "Good. We shall want you to take it up to the left company in the front line. I've got a good guide here. He'll take you along."

Our Ensign felt a trifle dismayed, for he had imagined his night's labours to be over. He glanced at his wrist. It was 11 P.M.

They started off again, past the regimental aid-post, and out on to a sunken road, where the corpses lay thick. As they plodded on, they seemed to come to a village, for crumbling bricks lay about the road. But of houses there was not a sign. Where the tide of battle has passed on the Somme you will not find stone left upon stone.

The guide, who had been leading them very confidently so far, now began to flag. He started to look about him. An awful suspicion seized upon the officer. He knew the symptoms well enough. He guessed what the guide's hesitation portended. There are very few officers who have served in the trenches in this war who have not been led astray by a guide some time or other.

A shell whizzed noisily overhead, and exploded close by with an appalling crash. Its orange burst revealed for a brief instant the devastation in that village of the dead.

"Mind yourself, sir!" called out the guide suddenly. Two men figures came dashing out of the darkness with levelled rifles.

"Hands up!" they yelled.

Our Ensign had pulled out his revolver.

"Stop that infernal noise!" he shouted, and then, heedless of consequences, he switched on his lamp.

Two figures in khaki were facing him.

"Are you British?" cried one, while the other gasped, panting—

"Oh dear! we've just walked into the German lines. Have you seen our officer, sir?" And they mentioned the name of their regiment.

Our Ensign could not help them, and presently they disappeared into the darkness. Then the party went plodding on until, once more, dark shapes loomed out of the night.

A Guards' officer came towards our Ensign. He took off

his cap and wiped his damp forehead.

"What a night!" he lamented. "My infernal guide walked us plumb into the Hun lines. All the Huns were yelling, 'Come on! We're waiting for you!' We made a bolt for it. I can't make out why they didn't shoot. I suppose they weren't sure that some of their own fellows weren't out as well!"

Woo-oof!

A shell burst violently behind the group.

"Bad place to gossip in," said our Ensign. "I suppose you don't know where we are, do you?"

"Devil a bit!" was the reply.

"You'll find two of your men down the path a little way," said our Ensign; "they nearly shot us!"

"Right!" answered the other unconcernedly. "Well, cheery-oh! Where the hell's that guide?" . . .

He and his train padded past in the darkness.

Suddenly our Ensign's guide recognised a landmark.

"I know that dead horse, sir," he exclaimed; "it's a little piece along here! I know the way now!"

Indeed, in a little, he brought the party to the mouth of a trench. There our Ensign found a Scots Guards' subaltern.

"Here we are again!" observed the latter serenely. "Cheerful spot."

"!!!!!!!" replied our Ensign. "Where do you want the stuff dumped?"

"What stuff?" returned the other, straining his eyes to peer into the outer blackness.

"R.E. material for the left company," said our Ensign.

"Right company here," answered the officer.

Our Ensign leant back against the parapet and, baring his head to the night, invoked the vengeance of the powers of darkness on the guide. Apparently the guide had likewise discovered his mistake, for from the mirky blackness outside the trench our Ensign heard a voice—the voice of one in authority—saying sternly—

"What dead horse?"

"The dead horse wot's lying alongside of two dead Huns!" came the pathetic voice of the guide.

"The dead horse you wanted, me lad," answered back the stern voice, "isn't alongside of any Huns! It's at the dead horse by the pond that you wanted to turn off!"

Our Ensign turned desperately to the officer.

"Look here!" he said firmly, "I've had enough of this nonsense. My men are dead-beat, and we are fed up with being led by a lot of fool guides into every barrage on this front. I'm going to dump the goods here, and you can send word along to the other company to come and fetch 'em!"

"My dear fellow," replied the other, "you can't do that. The other company probably wants your stuff urgently."

"If they want it so badly, they can dam well come and fetch it. I'm going home. It's

half-past twelve and we've been footing it since seven!"

"Look here," said the other soothingly, "I've got a sergeant of the left company here with me; he's just brought a message across. You can go back with him!"

Our Ensign wavered.

"How far is it?" he asked sullenly.

"Sixteen hundred yards," replied the other promptly.

Our Ensign reflected that, if this were a prevarication, the other would have said, "Just over there!" or, "A stone's-throw!" So he decided he would have to get those additional 1600 yards out of his weary men.

The sergeant appeared—a resolute person; the two officers parted, and once more the fatigue party strung out on its way along the corpse-strewn path. The men were very tired, so our Ensign marched in the rear and kept the stragglers together.

A lot of shells were coming over now, exploding noisily in the ruins of the village. But our Ensign hardly noticed them. He was desperately concerned lest, while he prevented the tail of his party from being left behind and lost, the head might be walking straight into the German lines.

The long train sagged, and finally halted. Our Ensign scrambled, fuming, to the head.

"Where's that guide?" he demanded.

"He's just after going to look for the way, sir!" said a soft Irish voice, which added: "Wirra, that's near!"

as a shell crashed into the ground close by.

Our Ensign got all the men into shell craters. The sights in those deep holes were enough to make a man sick. Then he told his sergeant he would give the guide five minutes by the watch. If he had not turned up at the end of that period of grace, they would dump their stuff where they were and steer for home by the compass.

Those were the longest five minutes our Ensign had ever spent. He was tormented by the fear lest a shell might fall in the midst of his party, and he should have twenty or thirty casualties to report on returning to the Wood. The shells came over fairly thick—about two a minute,—but they all burst beyond the men in their shell-holes. The men were magnificently cool. It struck our Ensign that

they were more concerned at not having reached their journey's end, tired out as they were, than at the dangers surrounding them.

Then a voice shouted from the darkness—

“Here you are! This way!”

Ten minutes later our Ensign led his party back along the sunken road and across the brown, shell-scarred slope. Weary though the men were, they were only too glad to force the pace and leave behind them the sights and sounds of the night.

“They’re saying behind, sir,” said the senior sergeant to our Ensign, as the party trudged along, “couldn’t we go a bit faster?”

“Oh! all right!” replied our Ensign carelessly, and quickened his pace. But he did not tell the sergeant that the same idea had long since occurred to him.

CHAPTER XI.

“The present day has no value for me except as the eve of to-morrow: it is with to-morrow that my spirit wrestles.”—METTERNICH.

The day was already three hours’ old by the time that our Ensign reached the Wood with his weary fatigue party. The trenches were wrapped in slumber, and from Bryan, upon whose recumbent form our Ensign trampled as he groped his way into the company dug-out, he learnt that the two companies which had been in the line had already gone back to the bivouac on the downs, and that the two companies in the Wood were expecting

momentarily to be relieved. There was no news of future movements: none of the officers, Bryan said, knew when the Guards were going to “pop the parapet.”

Two hours later, effectively, the relief turned up, and the two companies plodded out into the chilly morning back to their bivouac. It was not until 8 A.M. that the officers got into their sleeping-bags in the tents.

At noon the faithful John-

son aroused our Ensign with the news that a conference of officers had been called by the Commanding Officer, and that they were waiting for him. He splashed some water over himself, tore into his clothes, crammed his cap on over his tousled hair, and dashed off with a silent prayer that his unshaven chin might escape observation. But everybody was too deep in maps and plans to notice him. He and his brother officers left the conference knowing all there was for them to know about the impending attack, save only the detail that interested them all most keenly—the date!

The Battalion was to strike bivouac that evening, and march to a wood on the fringe of that corpse-strewn plain across which our Ensign had led his fatigue party the night before. Two companies were to be quartered in one corner of the wood, the remainder—Nos. 1 and 2 Companies—in a little copse on the eastward edge,—nearest the enemy, as our Ensign, with the shells of the previous evening in his mind, reflected sombrely. It was generally expected that the four companies would not meet again until they assembled for the attack.

There was a little pang of parting in that dirty bivouac among the rolling downs. As a measure of precaution, such experienced officers and non-commissioned officers as could be spared were not to accompany the Battalion into action, so as to leave an executive nucleus to carry on with, in

the event of heavy casualties. Of our Ensign's mess, Peter and The Don were of this number. Sadder and more dismal faces never were seen than the countenances of these two (and of their comrades in exile also, be it said) as they bade the departing companies God-speed and prepared to join the Transport.

At dusk that evening, in a drenching downpour of cold rain, the Battalion moved off into the unknown, our Ensign's company bringing up the rear. Truly it is a dismal thing, this marching into action! One hears an iron curtain clang down behind one, shutting off the past—and there were fragrant memories in our Ensign's mind of the pleasant *cameraderie* of the vanished summer—while the present glides imperceptibly away before the doubts and uncertainties of the future.

The rain splashed dismally down, the road was heavy and slippery with glutinous mud, and all around them the guns crashed out into the night with a roar that seemed to crack the very tympanum. The men hunched their waterproof sheets over their packs, and trudged along in mournful silence; and our Ensign let his mind toy despondently with the difference between his situation and that of men he knew—spick and span and spurred and polished,—these last holding decorative positions on the Staff at home.

They plodded along the same old highway of the battlefield, as crowded as ever, thronged

with the same old mass of tired men, and straining, plunging horses and mules. Plenty of bad language, especially in the blocks of traffic, which were frequent, came back at them from the night, while the rain plopped sadly into the puddles of the roadside; and, with green flash and reek and roar, the shells screamed their way through the night towards the soaring horizon lights. As they drew nearer to the front they heard the whistle and crash of German shells ahead of them in the darkness.

At last they left the road and followed a guide in single file along a muddy footpath, which brought them into the wet tangle of a devastated wood. As the men filed off into some crumbling trenches, our Ensign noticed three forms on the ground covered by waterproof sheets beside the wreck of a Lewis gun hand-cart.

"It was hard luck," somebody was saying; "they caught us coming in . . . shrapnel, it was . . . got these three at the very end of the line."

Then there was much groping and slipping about in the dark, as the officers got the two companies into such accommodation as the broken trenches and gaping shell-holes afforded—a rum issue, at which our Ensign found himself compelled to swallow, according to immemorial usage, nearly a mugful of the spirit, poured out of the stone jars by the dim light of a carefully-shaded candle; and then the men began to contrive for themselves all sorts of wonder-

ful shelters for the night with riddled fragments of corrugated iron sheeting, beams of wood, splintered branches and withered leaves. The officers left them to their task, and made their way to the dug-out which the Billeting Officer had designated to them as their quarters.

It was a great big shelter, as large as a small shed—and a shell-hole in the roof, which was the only damage, had been stuffed up with those wicker cases which the German gunners use to carry their live shells in. The place was constructed rather like a log-cabin, dug half a dozen feet deep in the ground, with solid timber sides and a roof of iron girders wattled over. The floor was covered with those wood or paper shavings which, under the influence of the British blockade, the Germans use in preference to straw. These shavings furnish bedding that is fully as clean and comfortable as straw, and certainly far more economical.

There was a very simple military funeral that night under the drenching rain, in the shell-ravaged copse. In a shell-hole the three victims of the night were laid to rest, and covered in. Two of the men were Catholics, the third Protestant, and both the R.C. and the C. of E. padres came up through the rain and mud that night to conduct the obsequies. And the next evening a plain wooden cross, well carpentered and neat, inscribed in black paint with the names and numbers of the

fallen Guardsmen, arrived with the rations, and was set up over the little grave, a landmark in that devastated countryside, the place of the unburied dead.

Like the wood which our Ensign had already explored on a former occasion, the copse and the wood beyond had been the scene of one of the Homeric fights of the battle of the Somme. This wood, too, was full of corpses, both British and German, and strewn with rain-soaked and rusting relics of the fray, lying amid battered trenches and wrecked dug-outs. During the days they spent in the copse, the men of the two companies spent their whole time in clearing the wood, stacking up the rifles, the bayonets, the equipment, collecting such identity discs as still remained on the dead before burying them, and bringing in to the officers' dug-out German shoulder-straps and letters and papers of all kinds. These were in due course sent down to the Brigade to be handed over to the Army Intelligence.

In the copse itself a German battery had been posted. There were indications that it had had its home there for many months. The dug-outs had been very well made, deep and comfortable, though the British heavy shells had played havoc with them now. In one a provision store was found, with tier upon tier of very mouldy black bread stacked up to the roof, many tins of canned meat (one ingenious Ensign introduced a tin of

German brawn into the mess and opened it for lunch, professing to find it delicious), and some tins of sardines. Another was stored with cordite charges. It was beneath the covered entrance leading down to this particular dug-out that our Ensign found the mess cook installed over a large fire, with burst bags of cordite lying all around. He was sternly bidden to shift his quarters elsewhere—which he did with an injured air.

Rooting about in the wood with MacFinnigan, our Ensign came upon a dug-out which had all but collapsed, a dead German, buried, save for his boots, at the entrance. MacFinnigan, who had no squeamishness about such matters, wormed his way into the dug-out, and presently began to hand up newspapers and letters and labels off parcels, brought by the *Feldpost* for the two bombardiers who, as the addresses on the various articles showed, must have lodged there. One was a Jew from Frankfurt-on-Main, who had a large correspondence with innumerable Cohns and Abrahams and Levys, mostly of the feminine persuasion; the other appeared to have been a Bavarian. Among the latter's letters was one from his wife, which gave a brief but tragic glimpse of the misery of everyday life in Germany in wartime—a side of the question which is rarely illumined in the newspapers. The letter was angry and bitter. After a long complaint about the growing food difficulties and

appalling price of everything, the woman, who wrote from a Bavarian village, told of some hitch in the payment of her separation allowance, and narrated how she had been to the Mayor to get redress, and had been "flung out" (*hinausgeschmissen*). In a torrent of unpunctuated, ungrammatical German, with many appeals to the "dear husband," she asked if that was the way the wives of brave German "warriors" should be treated, if "they" expected the people to make the enormous sacrifices demanded of them, when "they" unjustly deprived the women of their due.

The husband's answer was there too . . . begun on a field post-card (in the German army these are issued blank to the men) from the dug-out in the wood and never finished . . . interrupted, maybe, by the shell that smashed the dug-out and killed the man lying outside — who perhaps was the writer himself. It began in a torrent of abuse — the language of a man of the people defending his woman, setting forth the wife's complaint, asking how men who skulked at home dared so to treat the wife of a German "warrior." . . . And there the scrawling writing broke off short. The guns of the Somme had prevented a Bavarian Mayor from getting a post-card which would probably have momentarily soured the taste of his dinner beer.

Our Ensign had been given a definite job in the impending

attack. He was told he was not to "go over" with his company, but would act as Intelligence Officer, and in this capacity accompany the Second-in-command with a select party. The duties entrusted to him necessitated a good knowledge of the ground over which the attack was to be made; so one afternoon, whilst they were waiting in the copse, our Ensign got leave from The Beak, and, taking MacFinnigan, carrying a telescope, along with him, he set out to find out some eminence from which he might survey the scene.

Side by side, officer and orderly traversed the long brown slope which our Ensign had hitherto only crossed on a famous occasion at night. Then the darkness had mercifully hidden from their eyes the full horror of the battlefield which now lay in all its ghastliness before them, bare and brutal, in the soft light of a mild autumn day. Our Ensign blessed the name of John Cotton of Edinburgh as he marched along puffing at his briar. Truly tobacco is the sovereign herb in war: not only does it calm the nerves—it also dulls the sense of smell.

As they went up the ridge, our Ensign chatted with his orderly. MacFinnigan had a great thirst for knowledge: a secret was in the air which he would fain penetrate. . . .

"Is it a fact, sir? . . . Some of the men in the company were saying, sir . . . They do tell me, sir . . ."

What was the secret?

Hush, hush!

Wait and see! Whatever it was, it so engrossed our Ensign that it carried him right over the ridge and to the banks of a sunken road that ran transversely to his line of advance, where he was brought up short in his tracks.

Our Ensign had heard of the Germans being mowed down in swathes as they rushed hurrahing in dense formation to the attack of the forts of Liège; he had been told of the bridge at Landreocies piled high with German corpses after the Coldstream had given the Hun a taste of the Guards' rapid fire; he had had described to him how the British naval guns cleaved great furrows in the ranks of Germany's youthful legions on the Yser as they went forward, hand in hand, singing their soldier songs, to break through to Calais. He had heard of these things, I say, and had read of them in the papers like everybody else, but he had yet to realise what a shock one can get when the mental picture evoked by a newspaper paragraph comes in contact with the reality.

For he found himself on the high banks of that sunken road looking down upon piles of

German dead, two, three, four, and even five layers deep. The road had been put into a rough state of defence, and every embrasure cut out of the bank nearest the British had its ghastly mound of corpses. Their numbers he could not estimate, what their regiment he would not venture close enough to determine; he only knew that these men had died obeying their army order that Ginchy must be held to the last man . . . and the road was full of those gallant dead. By every embrasure one or two dead British soldiers were lying—probably, our Ensign thought, the first men to adventure into the trench of that forlorn German hope: one such khaki-clad figure still had his hands at the throat of the German across whose body he was lying with another German on top of him.

Even the unsqueamish Mac-Finnigan was overcome at the sight.

"How horrible, sir," he said; and then added, as an afterthought, "but they were brave men!"

Our Ensign lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply. Then he gave one to the orderly, and they passed on up the slope.

CHAPTER XII.

"'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble. . . ."

—*The Slaying of the Jabberwock.*

"Did ye hear what that man O'Flanagan was sayin', with the wather party las' night?"
him I mane as come up The speaker was a red-haired

Irish Guardsman—what they would call in Ireland a “foxy man”—who was cleaning his rifle and chatting the while with a grizzled comrade, who was composedly scraping the mud off his puttees with a piece of stick preparatory to going on parade for rifle inspection. Our Ensign, standing in the open watching a British aeroplane having a thrilling time in and out of Hun shrapnel puffs, overheard the men talking in the trench behind him.

The elder man, busy with his scraping, only grunted contemptuously.

“Didn’t he see thim with his own eyes,” the foxy man continued, tugging at his pull-through, “leppin’ the ditch and off across the open the same as they might be a lot of young horses? ‘The Lord save us!’ sez th’ officer, him as was with the wather party, ‘’tis the cateypillars!’ ‘Cateypillars?’ sez O’Flanagan, the chap as was tellin’ us about it—‘cateypillars is ut?’ sez he, ‘Begob,’ sez he, ‘’tis the first time ever I see cateypillars lep a ditch!’”

The other flung away his piece of stick, rubbed his hands together to get rid of the mud, and cast a leisurely glance over his person.

“Some of you young lads,” he said, “do be believin’ all you hears!”

“Amn’t I after tellin’ yez that O’Flanagan see thim himself?” answered the foxy man heatedly, applying his eye to the barrel of his rifle. “Like great crookeydiles they are,

sez he, with a crew of thirty men in their inside and machine-guns and bombs and God knows what else, sez he, and little windies to give the lads inside a blasht of fresh air. Is ut tellin’ us lies the man was?”

“I wouldn’t be sayin’ that,” the old soldier replied cautiously; “but some of you young lads has no sinse.”

And with that he stumped off to rifle inspection.

Now you know what our Ensign and his orderly were talking about so earnestly as they trudged up the ridge in the last chapter. They spoke of the Tanks, or, as they were then called, the Hush-hushes, which everybody had heard about and nobody had seen—the mysterious engines which were to lead the Guards into battle on a date not appointed.

Naturally it was Apollo who saw them first in the flesh, or should one say more correctly, in the steel plating? He blew into the officers’ dug-out after rifle inspection that morning and said in a tone of decision—

“I’ve seen ’em!”

“Who?” said our Ensign.

“What?” said Roderick more grammatically.

“Where?” said The Beak, whose forensic mind had already divined to what Apollo referred.

“Just off the road, about 300 yards from here, . . . the Tanks . . . a squadron of them . . . charming fellow in charge . . . showed me all round . . . amazing, wonderful . . . come

along and I'll take you down there!"

So they all trooped off behind him down the road, and presently in a wayside field came upon those monstrously grotesque and ungainly "ingins," which everybody has seen in the photographs in the papers, and which nobody is allowed to describe. A small and rotund Commodore . . . or whatever a Tank squadron commander is called, . . . who confessed to having been out of bed for two nights, did the honours very charmingly, . . . but let us tread softly, for we are on censored ground. Let it suffice to say that a captain, a subaltern, and three ensigns returned to the officers' dug-out, and swanked insufferably to their less fortunate comrades-in-arms who had not been among the first to see the Tanks, and that MacFinnigan and another orderly, who had been taken with the party, had the morning of their lives, the centre of an enthralled group of Guardsmen, all panting for information about "the crocodiles."

And for the moment everybody's mind was taken off the future.

But that afternoon—it was September 14th—the Commanding Officer came up, and the officers were bidden into the dug-out for a final conference, at which, among many other equally, but to at least one of them, less important details, they were informed that they would attack at 6.20 A.M. in the morning, and that they would move

up into position at 9 o'clock that night.

That afternoon the men sat about in the trenches . . . those of them that were not otherwise employed . . . and talked and smoked and read the curious provincial papers sent out to them from home. Only a bare handful of letters came in to the dug-out to be censored that afternoon. The British soldier prefers to do his work first and write about it afterwards. The men seemed bored by the waiting about. They yawned, and cocked an eye at the sky, and discussed the weather prospects for the next day, and argued unendingly about "the crocodiles," and the surprise they would be to "Fritz."

In the course of the afternoon The Don turned up, in full battle array, beaming with delight. After all, he was to "go over" with the company. It had been decided that another officer should remain behind in his place. That officer was one of the party in the dug-out in the copse . . . a spirit more ardent for battle never breathed in mortal man . . . and he was stricken dumb, beaten to the ground, with the force of his disappointment. Our Ensign, seeing the utter abasement of his grief, reflected on the strange ways that Providence adopts to reveal the pure metal that gleams in men of the British Army.

While it was still light, some of them went out to have a look at the positions which they were to take up that evening, and from which they were

to attack in the morning. Night marching across the open, even when you know the ground, is no joke; but when your direction leads you across wide trenches running at every imaginable angle, through tangles of barbed wire and over country that is nothing more or less than an infinite number of holes connected together by a little loose earth, why then, much forethought and preparation are required if you wish to avoid disaster. So the officers who went out reconnoitring took with them one man per platoon to mark the way and act as guides when they should go up that evening. To mark the route the guides stuck a few landmarks about in the shape of rusty rifles, picked up off the battlefield, inserted in the earth by the bayonet and decorated with a German helmet or a haversack—anything to catch the eye at night when seen against the skyline.

The officers dined together in the dug-out at 7.30 that evening, a very friendly and very business-like party of men. The table-talk was pure undiluted shop, the discussion of small details of company organisation with occasional desultory snatches of debate upon that fertile theme—the Tanks. But the greater issues of the morrow were avoided by tacit consent, and a stranger suddenly bidden to that dinner-table could hardly have supposed (our Ensign says) that his hosts were preparing for anything more serious than a field-day on a large scale.

Our Ensign has often since

looked back upon that last dinner of Nos. 1 and 2 Company Mess—the last supper of the Girondins somebody called it,—the long table (cunningly contrived out of trench-boards) covered with the famous white American cloth cover, the candles stuck in bottles, the white enamel mess crockery, the familiar faces all round the board, the background of raincoats and glasses and revolvers and belts hung on nails hammered into the tree-trunks forming the walls of the dug-out; and in the chiaroscuro of the upper part of the room the dimly-seen features of the Mess servants as they passed to and fro.

Some one had stored up a bottle of champagne for this special occasion; needless to say it had been forgotten, and the Girondins raved at the thought that their comrades back at the Transport were in all probability even now toasting them in the goblet that should have foamed at *their* lips. So the double-company Mess had to fall back upon a very moderate supply of a somewhat anæmic claret. They would have undoubtedly pledged one another in this rare old wine (vintage, Félix Potin, Amiens), only this formality was unfortunately overlooked in a furious discussion which arose in the matter of fixing the responsibilities in the affair of the forgotten bottle of champagne.

All through dinner messages kept arriving, company sergeant-majors or orderlies bulking large in the low entrance

to the dug-out. Here an officer scribbled a note or an acknowledgment in his notebook laid flat beside his plate: there a couple of ensigns, amid the stewed pears in soup-plates, the glasses, the candles in their bottles, and the white mugs of steaming coffee, pored over their maps for the hundredth time to fix in their memories a mental picture of the morrow's line of advance. Servants crept in with flasks or water-bottles filled, or with sandwiches wrapped in paper. Many were the beverages recommended as sovereign for battle by the veterans. One urged rum-and-water, another neat whisky, a third cold tea, a fourth tea mixed with brandy. The last recipe appeared to command most suffrages, and our Ensign accordingly decided for it.

As the hour of departure drew near, one by one, gradually, the officers rose from the sandbag divan on which they had sat at meat and started to array themselves for battle, girding on their belts hung with a manifold collection of apparatus. One by one they clapped their helmets on their heads and stumped up the little stair into the night.

Thus, imperceptibly, the double-company Mess broke up, and the partnership of the summer months was dissolved for ever.

It was a cold, clear, starlit night, but still darkish, for the moon had not yet risen. Once outside the dug-out, our Ensign heard the low murmur

of voices, the clatter of accoutrements from the open space in front of the trenches where the company was assembling. On the road in front he could see dim figures slowly advancing up the ridge: he guessed these to be the other two companies, who had bivouacked in the other part of the wood, moving up to their positions for the attack.

No smoking or talking was allowed; and it was in the most complete silence that at length the two companies moved away, a platoon at a time, each behind its guide. The air was dry and cold, with a touch of frost: it would be cold sleeping out in the open, but anything was better than rain.

The guides picked up their landmarks and led the men without trouble into the segment of trench allotted to them. The trench was crumbling from the autumn rains that had eaten into its shell-scored sides. In parts it had a foot of water. There were many corpses in it. There was no shelling. The night was very still. Only on the horizon, beyond the ridge which on the morrow the Guards would cross, the starshells soared into a brief span of brilliant life, flickered, and died. Quietly the men slipped into their places in the trench, or, where it was water-logged, into shell-holes behind.

Now the moon, waning from full, began to rise and to shed its silver radiance on the muffled forms asleep in shell-

hole and in trench amid the unburied dead. In the cold white light the ruined farm behind the sleeping figures looked like a bleached skeleton, and the devastation sur-

rounding them stood out hard and clear. In the distance the star-shells, less brilliant than their wont in the effulgence of the moon, seemed to beckon. . . .

CHAPTER XIII.

"One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting, and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—O make haste!"
—OMAR KHAYYÁM.

Our Ensign awoke with a start. His limbs were stiff and cold. He felt frozen to the very marrow. The earth of his shell-hole was firm to the touch under the night's frost. The sky was tinted like a thrush's egg, and in the wide expanse of bluey green the stars were paling to the rising of the sun.

The air was all astir with movement. It was still the twilight of dawn, and here and there about the broken trenches and yawning shell-holes, where the Battalion had passed the night, patches of white mist hung, like the ghosts of the uncoffined dead that lay so thick upon the barren slope. The atmosphere was cold and deliciously clear, but the earth, warming to the sluggish approach of day, exhaled the sweet and clammy odour of death blended with the scent of freshly-turned clay,—the smell of the battle-field of the Somme.

As our Ensign struggled to his feet and surveyed the scene from his shell-hole, he saw all around him men hoisting on their equipment, talking in

low murmurs the while. To restore the circulation to his frozen limbs he walked briskly over to the left, where the trenches of his company lay. He was surprised to find how cool and business-like the men were, as they strapped up their haversacks and struggled into their equipment. They talked in low tones. They grouched about the cold, about the discomfort of the night; but on every face was seen a look of relief that the period of waiting was almost over, rather than of apprehension at the trial that was to come.

The old soldiers were, with their ingrained fatalism, very deliberate and quite chatty. The young men were quieter and some a little fretful. But, as our Ensign walked along the trench and exchanged a word or two with the men of his own platoon, he found that, under all the superficial calm, something was smouldering into flame that he had never noticed in them before.

The guns were still barking away steadily. Listening, our Ensign could distinguish the characteristic notes—the sharp

salvoes of the field-guns, flinging their projectiles, six at a time, into the enemy wire on the other side of the ridge, the deeper rush of the 6-inch guns, and the swooping flight, starting far away in the rear, of the heavy howitzer shells. Here he ran across the officers of his company. The Beak was as serenely magisterial as ever.

"I wish you were coming with the company, old boy!" he said to our Ensign, who cordially echoed the wish.

"You fellows will go romping gaily through the demoralised Hun," dolefully observed our young man, "and do prodigies of valour, while I shall get the whole of the German barrage coming over the ridge, and probably get done in before I have had a chance of displaying those feats of intelligence which are expected of me!"

"Don't you worry," remarked Bryan darkly; "you'll probably be commanding the company by breakfast-time!"

Then they wished one another good luck and went their ways, for the men were forming up, while over the still morning air a most remarkable sound came floating.

That steady, low throbbing was indescribably exhilarating. The men pricked up their ears and began pointing excitedly to the crest of the ridge ahead, where strange, amorphous masses seemed to be crawling inch by inch through the mists of morning. In a moment the pangs of waiting, which always increase as the fatal hand casts its shadow upon the appointed hour, had fled. Every eye was following the snail-like pro-

gress of those strange, humming monsters: every mind was rehearsing the effect they would produce when they blundered out of the clinging haze into the enemy's front line. Thus the Tanks made their *début* in the history of warfare, and whatever importance posterity may allot to their share in the victory of September 15, to their inventors be given the thanks of the Guards' Division, for that His Majesty's Landships whiled away a *mauvais quart d'heure* when the Guards were waiting to attack.

Our Ensign found Headquarters in a shell-hole, the Commanding Officer talking over some final point with the Adjutant and the Drill Sergeant. The sky had changed from pale green to lemon, and the delicate yellow, where it touched the brown line of the ridge, was burnished to a deeper gold by the flood of light from the rising sun. The mists were all but melted. Another day had begun.

So few objects had the tide of battle, sweeping across the undulating plain, left standing, that their outlines, isolated, bare in the clear morning light, left their impress for ever on our Ensign's memory, . . . the blackened tree-trunks dotting the ruined site of the village on the right of the ridge, with a forest of bare poles marking the wood behind, the barren ridge between, the confused mass of broken trees to the left denoting that famous D— Wood in which the horrors of the Somme battlefield reached their climax,

6.15. Every one is on his feet now, the officers with their helmets well strapped on under their chins, stick in one hand, map in the other, revolver at their belt, their orderly at their elbow; the men with bayonets fixed, gleaming here and there in the sun, armed *cap-à-pie*, their big frames leaning on their rifles in such poses of unconscious grace as would have thrilled the heart of Meissonier or Détaillé.

The throbbing of the Tanks has ceased. Still, the guns pound steadily on with their appointed task. There is the low humming of an aeroplane engine somewhere in the sky, but the light is too dazzling for one to see it.

It is an eerie thing to stand on the threshold of history. Before them stretched the ridge, blank as the unwritten page. Would victory or defeat, success or failure, stand inscribed thereon before the sun, that even now was bathing the shell-scarred earth with light, had sunk to rest? What hazards awaited them over that low and corrugated crest? What triumphs, what agony, what tears would the next hours bring?

Then the whistles sounded, and with a roar like the breaking of a tropical squall, the hurricane was let loose. Amid the most appalling roar of guns the Guards moved steadily off up the long brown slope, while from the German lines in the distance rose great spouts of red and green and white rockets clamouring for a barrage. Those cascades of

coloured lights were frantic in their appeal, bursting high in the air above the exploding shells and dense pillars of white and black and yellow smoke, silent amid the furious din of battle, but emphatic in their cry . . . "Help us quickly . . . we are being attacked!" . . . the S.O.S. of the battlefield.

The whole line moved forward in a dense irresistible impact, wave upon wave. The din was indescribable. The rising shriek of the shells, simultaneous, successive, incessant, formed a vast diapason accompaniment to the snap and whinny and whistle of the bullets whirling through the air. Our Ensign, plodding along with a select party, led by the Second-in-command, in the centre of the attack, felt his blood boiling to the thrill of that mighty roar of noise. The sense of power which the guns gave was overwhelmingly exhilarating. He looked about him, and saw that the men all around were bubbling with high spirits as they trudged forward in and about and around the shell-holes. There was no rush about this attack. It was a slow, steady advance, relentless, irresistible.

It carried every man onward with it in its stride. It carried our Ensign, new as he was to war, with indifference, as it seemed to him at the time, past white and flaccid figures lying in curiously bent positions in or on the edges of the shell-holes, past men moaning and running with blood, past others shivering with ghastly wounds. In and out of the

line trotted the stretcher-bearers, big stolid men—they are chosen for their inches in the Guards, for they have heavy burdens to carry—perspiring and blowing and brave, with an utter indifference to danger that was good to see. As he went forward up the ridge, glancing continually at the map folded open in his hand, for there was a tricky turn to make at the top, our Ensign suddenly came upon a white and silent figure, a young ensign of the Coldstream, lying dead upon one outflung arm, his face towards the advancing line, his feet towards the crest of the slope. He was very young, and our Ensign had known him, as one knows men in the army, from different occasions that had brought them together in the field. He remembered him as a pleasant, handsome boy, and our Ensign noticed, as he glanced at him in passing, that he had not changed in death.

Now they had reached the top of the ridge. The German barrage was in full blast. From the crest the ridge ran down a little and then mounted again to the flat horizon. From crest to skyline the whole intervening space seemed to be flecked with shell-bursts, and in and out of the white and black smoke-drifts went the long steady lines.

About the crest of the ridge and on either slope the German shells crashed heavily, with a thud that made the air tremble, with a reek of sulphur that caught the breath, with

sickening clouds of heavy black smoke. Still, the British guns maintained their ceaseless roar, still their shell-bursts dotted the horizon, still the air hummed and whirled with the flying bullets.

The advance had stopped for an instant. The lines of Guardsmen before, around, and behind our Ensign halted erect upon the skyline. Men wiped their brows, for the going had been heavy, and passed the time of day with their friends.

Our Ensign caught a glimpse of many of his friends—The Don, with his best Balliol manner, the strap of his helmet under the point of his chin, his eyeglass in his eye; Bruce, one of the company commanders, was there too, sitting in the shell-hole into which he had been blown, taking a careful compass bearing; also Apollo, tying up a sergeant who had been hit.

Then the advance went forward again—steady, slow, relentless as before, and presently once more it came to a halt. Something stirring was happening on the lower slope of the ridge. There the lines were rushing forward. Between the drifts of the smoke there was a glimpse of charging figures, a glint of the sun on naked bayonets. . . .

As our Ensign stood gazing through the haze of the shell-bursts the lines enclosing him seemed to go wild. A mad yell—not a cheer, but the deep-throated battle-cry of an ancient fighting race—rang out all about him. He glanced

about him to find himself in the midst of the Irish Guards, "whorooing" like a thousand souls in torment, laughing, shouting, yelling. In the centre of the picture was a striking group. Three Irish Guardsmen stood together, magnificent men all, built as massive as oaks, their eyes dancing with excitement. One leaned upon his rifle, his head thrust forward as he gazed enraptured upon that charge down in the valley; the centre figure was bareheaded, and across his chest, blown flat by the breeze, was the green flag of Erin with its golden harp; while the third Guardsman, holding his rifle with its shining bayonet in his left hand, rested his right upon his comrade's shoulder. And the man with the flag was bellowing like a bull—

"Go it, the Coalies! We're behind yez, me boys! The Mick is on your heels!"

Below, at the foot of the slope, a sturdy figure, a little silver hunting-horn to its lips, plodded serenely forward, . . . the Commanding Officer of the Coldstream Guards in his familiar French shrapnel helmet, with the ridged crown under its khaki cover, in the midst of the shouting, charging line of the remnants of his battalion who had rallied to the horn of the Tanatside Harriers.

Then amid a fierce crescendo of yells the Irish Guards went forward in a rush like a pack of hounds. There was no stopping them. The killing had begun, and they must be in at the death. As they

vanished tempestuously into the haze our Ensign heard a sharp cry beside him.

"Oh, sir!"

MacFinnigan was on the ground, his left arm limp, the blood gushing out from his shoulder. Our Ensign plucked his field-dressing from its pocket in the lining of his jacket, and bound the man up as best he could. The orderly was very game, for, though he made no sound, his face showed that he was in pain. Our Ensign gave him a drink out of his water-bottle . . . tea and brandy mixed . . . and turned to the Second-in-command, who was speaking to him.

"They've stopped again," he said. "Isn't that Bruce over there by the road? I wonder why they are not going on. I think you'd better go and ask Bruce, and come back here and tell me, so that we can send back word to the Commanding Officer."

Our Ensign marked the spot where he left the party. The Second-in-command was in a shell-hole beside a blackened stump of a telegraph pole, MacFinnigan at his feet. On the crest of the ridge, exposed to the full blast of machine-gun fire and the barrage, there were many dead and wounded. The air was full of bullets, the shells were bursting noisily all over the place, and our Ensign frequently resisted a strong inclination to duck.

Presently he came across two stretcher-bearers of his own battalion. They were bending over a man who was obviously at the point of death.

"He's gone," said the first stretcher-bearer. "Come on now, Michael!" as our Ensign came up. The officer asked them to attend to his orderly, pointing to the place with his stick.

"Sir!" said the first stretcher-bearer, straightening himself up. Our Ensign remembered this little touch of formality afterwards, and recollected that, at the time, this echo of the "square" had not struck him as unusual.

He reached the spot where he thought he should find Bruce, but it turned out to be an officer of another Brigade who had strayed a little off the line. The Coldstream had been held up, he told our Ensign, by a couple of unsuspected trenches between them and the first objective, but the line had gone on now.

Our Ensign hastened back to report. As he had gone over to the right the advance had passed on in his absence, and the ground was deserted save for the wounded and the dead. As he hurried over the broken ground a bullet sang past his ear with a loud crack. A man nursing a bleeding leg in a shell-hole called out to him—

"They're sniping from the dug-outs yet, sir. You'll want to mind yourself!"

Our Ensign plunged on. Suddenly out of a shell-hole at his very feet scrambled a tall, wan figure in grey, a blood-stained bandage wound about his head. Our young man had his revolver out in a second. But the stranger made no show of resistance. He was repeat-

ing to himself in a sing-song voice—

"Kamerad! Nicht schiessen! Kamerad! Nicht schiessen!"

Our Ensign drove the German on in front of him until he came to a sunken road where a Grenadier sergeant and half a dozen men were marshalling a score or so of much-dishevelled German prisoners. He handed over the German, who was still crooning his song, and pursued his way towards the shell-hole by the blackened telegraph pole.

He found it deserted. The Second-in-command, MacFinnigan, the rest of the party, all had vanished. On the ground lay a blood-stained whistle and some shreds of field dressing.

The German shell fire had greatly increased in intensity. They were now laying a barrage over the whole scene of the advance. Our young man found that walking alone over heavy, shell-swept ground is a very different thing from sweeping forward with the advancing line, with courage and resolution running, like an electric fluid, from man to man. So he bent his head and started to get over the ground and out of the barrage as hard as he could.

Strange and manifold are the encounters of the battlefield. A brief half an hour before, the brown and furrowed slope, up which our Ensign was painfully making his way to the farther ridge beyond which the Guards had disappeared, had been No Man's Land—the desolate tract at which, from the front trenches, one would peer furtively through a peri-

scope. Now it was the highway of the battlefield, strewn with the wastage of the fight, traversed by the lagging steps of the wounded.

There is this vision in our Ensign's memory. . . . An officer with half his tunic torn to ribbons, one bare arm wrapped in bandages protruding from his shirt, bareheaded, livid of face, besmeared with mud and blood. He staggered like a drunkard as he walked straight ahead, falling into shell-holes, heedless of the enemy fire. On one intact lapel of his tunic the small grenade of the Royal Engineers had survived intact.

"Blown up with some sappers," he said thickly to our young man, "lookin' for dressin' station . . . terrible . . . terrible, . . ." and he reeled onward over the broken earth.

Then came a hurrying, stumbling herd of German prisoners, abject, dishevelled, hands above their heads, four strapping Guardsmen, each with a helmet hung to his belt, driving them before them, broad grins on their faces.

Now our Ensign had reached the first of those hidden trenches which had brought a burst of unsuspected fire to bear on the advancing Coldstream. The khaki was pretty thick amid the trampled and riven wire, but beyond the *Feldgrauen* lay in heaps, many still wearing the little round caps and the greatcoats in which they had been sleeping, their arms outspread, waxen-faced, limp, and where they lay the brown earth was stained a deeper hue.

A little group came hobbling painfully towards our Ensign

as he went up the slope, two Grenadiers carrying one of their officers on a rifle slung between them. They stopped in front of our Ensign. The Grenadier was as white as a sheet of paper.

"Are you in pain?" said our young man.

"Pretty fair," came from the other's white lips.

"Where are you hit?" asked our Ensign.

"Stomach . . . do you know anything about it? These men were going to take me to an aid-post."

"I don't know much about it," said our young man, "but I think you ought to lie quiet for a stomach wound. The Huns are barraging pretty hard back there, and I believe you'd be safer here for a bit in one of these shell-holes."

"Got any brandy?" asked the Grenadier.

"Tea and brandy mixed," replied our Ensign; "but really, you know, you oughtn't to drink, though you're welcome to the lot. Will you have a cigarette? . . . that can't hurt you."

The two Grenadiers had very gently deposited their load in a shell-hole, and one of them, pulling a haversack off a dead man lying on the lip of the crater, put it under the wounded officer's head. Our Ensign gave the wounded man a cigarette, and lit it for him. The Grenadier puffed for a moment in silence, then said—

"How are things going?"

"Everything looks all right," replied our young man; "the

whole Brigade seems to have walked off the map. I'm trying to catch 'em up . . . there's a devil of a lot of dead Huns lying around . . . that's always a good sign. . . ."

"I suppose you'll have to be going on," said the wounded man wearily; "take care of yourself, and good luck!"

"So long! I hope you'll be all right," said our Ensign, and once more started to clamber up the slope after a glance at his compass to assure himself that he was bearing in the right direction. He kept a sharp look-out ahead to see if he could discern any signs of his own battalion. He thought he must soon be catching up with them now. . . .

Then, without any warning, he was flung headlong into a shell-hole amid a foul reek of black smoke and a thick cloud of dust.

"That's done it! I'm dead!" was his first thought; but he found himself unwounded at the bottom of the hole, his throat and nose full of dust and his ears singing.

He scrambled out in a panic and dashed on. He caught up with a Guards officer, whose face he seemed to know, leading a party of heavily laden men.

"Are you machine-guns?" he asked the other, as he drew level . . . his voice sounded very faint in his ears. The other made no reply. Our Ensign repeated his question,

and still he got no response. Our young man was feeling dazed and rather cross, and was about to shout his question for the third time, when he observed, greatly to his surprise, that the other officer was speaking to him—that is to say, his lips were moving, but our Ensign heard nothing.

Then the officer put his hands to his mouth and bawled: "I'm— . . . Stokes mortars . . . you know me . . . you dined with us the other night!" Our Ensign explained that he had just been blown up . . . and realised that he was almost deaf. Presently their ways parted, and our Ensign was once more trudging on alone.

He crossed a trench where Guardsmen were digging in furiously among a lot of German corpses, passed a Tank on the extreme left, apparently stranded and looking forlorn but intact, met other troops of German prisoners, each bigger than the last, shuffling along at their brisk, characteristic amble, reached the top of the ridge, and plunged into a network of broken barbed wire. There the bullets were humming, and men were shouting and shooting furiously from a crowded trench just in front of him, while in the distance he heard the "tack-tack" of machine-guns and the reverberating explosions of bombs. Bending low our Ensign pelted through the wire, and sprang into a dense throng of men in the trench.

(To be continued.)

THE GARDENS OF KASHMIR.

BY ODYSSEUS.

THE DAL LAKE.

"The delight of the Worldling and the retired abode of the Recluse."—
ABUL FAZL.

"Perhaps in the whole world there is no corner so pleasant as the Dal Lake."—SIR WALTER LAWRENCE.

THE Dal, whose beauties were so opulently chanted by Tom Moore, is something more than a piece of exquisite water. It is a world in itself. Here are fields, and orchards whose bloom drifts upon the lucent waters, and meadows enamelled with purple and gold; splendid trees—the chinara, the poplar, and the apricot, and willows by the waterways; houses of the great and the humble, and gardens of the emperors; sheep feeding in the grassy glades, and black cattle; the ploughman behind his steers; little fish speeding like arrows through the limpid water; halcyons displaying their turquoise wings, and bulbuls singing in the willows, and turtle-doves whose music fills the morning. Here are canoes carrying the people about their daily avocations, with women in them and lovely children, and barges laden with the produce of the islands; *shikaras* that wait in line behind the flood-gates, like gondolas at St Mark's. Here are the floating gardens of Kashmir, and the gardeners at work carrying fresh soil across the lake where it

widens, while their punting-poles shine like silver in the sunlight, and one who is lovesick sings a *gazal* in the stern. The gardens look like firm earth till you move away a yard or two, and then see them suspended in the lustrous water, while the dragonflies flash about them with incredible speed.

And ever beyond these there are the white snows and Solomon's Throne, and the blue uprising mountains with their shining peaks and shadowy valleys, imaged in the lake.

It is a place that is apt to spoil one; its beauty, like that of the woman who loves one, is so accessible, its charm so little concealed. You have but to call a *shikara*, and in a moment you are launched upon its joys.

You leave for it, it may be, at early dawn, before the melting snows have raised the level of the river and so closed the great sluice-gates of the lake. Early as is the hour, life is already afoot. Here is a man standing placidly in the water taking his morning ablution, and here are many more, with the early light shining

upon their faces, absorbed in the morning prayer. The boats are moving, and the day has begun.

The sun is not yet risen behind the Takht-i-Sulaiman, but Hara Parbat is already bathed in an amber glow of light, a beautiful proud castle on its hill. Upon the far snows of Tata Kuti and the Pir Pansal the sun had long been shining, but the Eastern mountains behind whose sierras his orb is concealed are yet wrapped in deep violet shadows, where the Nishat Bagh and the Shalimar still slumber in the embraces of Night. The waters below and about us are grey and green and gleaming with light, birds are a-wing, and the sounds of increasing day are abroad: the plash of oars, the voices of women, the twittering cheep of the swallows as they swiftly skim the water, the strident crowing of cocks.

See the red heifer in the morning sun, the whole pose of her body receptive of his warmth and light; the boats stealing through the green willows like phantoms of the morning; the white geese sailing with their little families like a fleet abroad; the orioles flitting like shafts of sunlight through the glades.

We come to Kraliyar, where a temple with its silvered roof is shining in the sun, and its stairs and carved balconies over the water are crowded with Brahmins bathing and at prayer. The ritual they are at is incomparably old. Beyond the temple there is a beautiful old bridge of Mogul days, with the name of the builder written

in marble under its shadowy arches, and about it a cluster of many houses, with high garden walls hung with vines and alive with the dancing of water-gleams over wall and leaf. Red roses droop from the garden pavilions, and a field of white iris is as moonlight in the morning. Hereabouts is a big shepherd carrying sheaves of young willow-shoots to his goats, while his children play by the water. One of them, a little girl of five, consents to be made a picture of, but holds her very heart with fear; and finally breaks into tears, though she goes bravely through the awful ordeal to its close.

The home of this family is upon an island that rises about a foot above the lake, and is ringed about with white poplars. Upon its outskirts there are water-lilies and neat willows, and upon its edges there lie the last clods of earth and fibre from the lake bed that have been added to its sum. Within this miniature embankment there are fields and orchards. In the centre there is the house, tall and double-storied, of brown wood, with a thatched roof; and about this little inclusive world there is an expanse of clear waters, and high mountains whose shadows change and swoon upon its surface.

Twenty years ago, when this man was still a lad, this homestead had not emerged from the waters of the lake. One cannot grudge him his possession; yet it is this ceaseless hunger for firm earth which is gradually narrowing the

borders of the Dal, and will one day convert one of the loveliest waters of the world into fields and tenements.

* * *

As we approach the Nishat Bagh the environment changes subtly from peasant homes in a fen country, from the pleasant scenes and events of rural life, to something that is visibly superb and noble. For here the mountains are very near, and their giant masses stand up above the lake

“Like the thrones of Kings.”

Deep blue shadows lie about them, giving a lustre to their surface, and steep valleys fall profoundly to the water.

Yet between them and the lake there is room for an Imperial Garden.

The still noon, as we draw near it, is resonant with the crooning of doves, whose music is borne as if by enchantment across the unruffled mirror of the lake. A high-backed bridge makes a water-gate or portal to the garden and its imperial pavilions. A man who passed it in bygone days must have known that he was now entered upon the dangerous precincts of the Court.

Every step I take in this wonderful valley carries me into possession of something that is yet more exquisite, till my power of expression is numbed, and my senses are overcome by a beauty I cannot yet grasp or describe. I am thus in a position to sympathise with the Court poet at the coronation of the Emperor, upon whom a fresh robe of

honour was flung with each verse that fell from his lips!

I have a suspicion as I enter the Nishat Bagh that the Door of Paradise has been opened, and that I have been led by some Peri by the hand to look upon what must surely be the most wonderful view in the world.

I speak not of the garden rising in imperial terraces, with a lavishness of space and of height beyond height, to the overwhelming line of the mountains; for as yet I have had no power to advance beyond the first pavilion of the garden. To this I am tied as by the Peri's wand, and I am content to sit by the marble throne upon which so many that were great and splendid in their day reposed—Shah Jahan, who so loved his dear lady of the Taj, Dara unwitting of his terrible end, and Aurangzéb, whose cold heart was set upon other things than the beauty of this world. Reclining here in the noonday peace, I look upon the same marvellous picture that they, and so many more whose names are writ in water, must have looked upon. Even now it is something of an exclusive view, for the door which admits me into this belvedere is closed behind me, and I am the sole tenant with the birds of this magic chamber looking out upon a scene of fairy beauty.

How shall I record its loveliness?

There is in truth the lake before me, a great pool of tranquil water, blue where the sky

looks into it, white and opal where the ascending clouds throw their living image upon it, still as if an enchantment lay upon it; like a sheet of silver here, like an embroidered carpet there, where the water-lilies rise upon their slender filaments to its surface, to lap at ease above the hidden world below; so wide and calm that it looks of kin with infinite space, yet defined by shadowy trees which hang, as it were, between water and heaven; by hamlets and villages, whose brown roofs mingle with the natural world; by a castle set upon a hill, the image of an Hellenic Acropolis, yet touched with I know not what suggestion of a Monastery upon a hill in which some Buddhist Pope might have his habitation, aloof from the sorrow, the transitoriness, and the illusion of Life; and yet again, defined by mountains so vast and so far-uplifted into heaven that they might be the very thrones of God.

Blue they are and silver in their valleys and snow-white upon their heights, yet in this fierce noonday sun, all molten into one marvellous prism of light. So great they look with the white cloud-towers mingling with their summits that they seem to have no limits to their greatness.

Thus you have mountain and sky and water and a castle upon a hill, and the tale might be thought complete were it not for some one whose instinct for perfection added a bridge, high-arched as of olden days, dark and shadowy in the

midst of this lustrous world. A thin line like a thread of green connects it at either end with the substantial earth, and cattle steal out from the woods and cross this filament of road, and ascend and descend the high arch of the bridge like phantoms shaped in velvet.

And yet again there are boats that come from the city, laden with veiled women and flower-faced children, and slowly they steal across the water, every form and line reflected in its magic surface, till they touch the landing-stairs—as of old an emperor might have done—and so pass into the enchanted garden.

Nor is this all; for nearest of all, below the black marble throne, is the high stone wall of the garden with its vases filled with purple, and a pool with fountains set amidst the grass, upon which and the bordering roses their spray falls like mist. And upon either side of this there are far-reaching thickets of Persian lilac still in bloom.

Inside the pavilion, from which all these wonders are meant to be seen, there is silence, and there are veiled shadows, and the wistful peace of a day that has gone for ever. In the place of the magnificent lord who built it, of the mighty emperor who claimed to hold the world in fee, of the lovely women chosen for their perfection to add the last touch to this place of superlative excellence, there are little sparrows building their nests under the fretted eaves, and rooks that chaffer within the inner court,

and a dove sheltering from the summer noon.

Yet is this place not sad, like so many other relics of departed glory. The ferocity of Asia has not reached to this secluded corner; the dust and the havoc that appear in so many other places, once the chosen of kings, have no power here over the beneficence of Nature. The grass is as green, the flowers are as bright and scented, the

waters as sparkling, and the vision of the world without as majestic and beautiful, as they ever were in the days of the Mogul prime. There is but enough of decay and of the touch of a vanished hand to whisper of our frail mortality which turns to dust. It does it so soothingly that it falls like a benediction upon the spirit, and almost reconciles the soul to the inevitable.

THE NISHAT BAGH.

The Nishat Bagh rises in a series of twelve terraces—the number of the Zodiac—from the water's edge, and is of a size and stateliness befitting the Mogul Court at the height of its splendour. Much of its architectural beauty has suffered from the passing of three hundred years since Asaf Khan, the brother of Nur Jahan and the father of Arjumand, the Lady of the Taj, turned his accomplished mind to its construction; and many of its details have been lost or obscured in the vicissitudes to which so many of the princely tombs and palaces and gardens of that day have succumbed; and none more so than the tomb of Asaf Khan itself, which stands stripped of all its marbles, a worn skeleton, by the railway track outside Lahore. Yet withal, this garden of his retains its perfection, and Time has even added splendour to its trees, now at the very climax of their lives.

It is indeed these trees which first and foremost appeal to

one's unmeasured admiration. There are groves of them, and each is a giant of its princely race. Then there are the Great Terraces, as superb in their dignity and in their proportions as on the day they were made—and one cannot fail to admire the art with which they were designed to convey the impression of infinity, as of an endless series, passing into the high mountains which rise above them. The tenth terrace, which marks the approach to the Zenana of the great nobleman, is the loftiest and most impressive, and it indicates the transition from the public to the secluded part of the garden. "Behold the high wall which guards my honour," it seems to say, "and respect its mandate!" An octagonal throne surmounts it, and a great fall of waters plunges from it into the pool below. Here is the completion, as it were, of the third act of the drama of this spectacular garden.

On either hand of these

stairs and fountains and thrones, and of the central stream that animates it, the garden melts away into orchards and secluded meads, so that its high boundary walls are hidden from sight. Here, in these humbler days, flocks of sheep graze under the apple-trees and amidst fields of snow-white iris, adding their note of pastoral beauty to the formal stateliness of the garden.

At the far summit, where of old the beauties of the harem walked, there is a final belvedere, which commands, without itself being seen, the whole reach of the garden to the lake, and the world of loveliness beyond it. This innermost sanctuary is now in ruins; but most lovely at this season of early May, with its roof-garden of flags, whose violet and purple glow like the robe of an emperor through the sunlight screen of the chinars. At the wings, also, there are octagonal pavilions, from which to look out upon the countryside; but these are now in hopeless decay. Through holes and doorways in the back wall of the garden cattle steal in and graze where the ladies walked, and beyond this wall there is naught but the peasant hillside from which this princely garden was evolved.

All its secrets are now laid bare, and the stately mystery in which it was wrapped, whether as a work of Art or as the Sanctuary of one who was mighty and powerful in his day and generation, is no more. You may take a meas-

uring-tape and learn just how long and how broad this garden of his is, the number of its terraces, and the width of its inner chambers, and there is no corner of it into which you may not pry. Yet so fine and perfect is it in its design and character that you retain for it at all times a great respect.

For the rest: there are beds now of brilliant flowers, guelder roses which droop under the weight of their own bloom, roses which sustain the fame of Kashmir by their perfection and luxuriant growth, honeysuckle on the high terrace walls, and daisies self-sown enamelling the grass. Time has destroyed much, but it has added such mellow qualities as time alone can give; and you feel this when you see old brick pavements, once so formal, now become a part of the earth itself, and billowing about the trunks of the great chinars, which were infants when they were laid, in geometrical designs along the water-courses.

It would seem also that there is no garden in the world in which one is so free to do as one pleases. My breakfast was laid in this garden, as if it were my own, under the heavy shade of a chinar which stands alone by the fourth terrace in all the pride of its own loveliness. The grass below it was like a carpet, and the roof above me was a marvellous fabric of pointed leaves dappled with light and shadow, of grey boughs spotted like the cloudy leopard, and little spaces of blue sky. There was light, vivid and splendid, all about me, but

none that directly penetrated this natural canopy. The hot sunlight, and the gentle zephyrs of the garden as they came blown in ripples across the lake, combined to provide me with an Elysian climate, while the plashing, soaring fountains filled the garden with a mist, upon which there were graven all the colours of the prism.

Across the water from the City the boats stole one by one, landing their freight of sight-seers out for a day of pleasure. All these people came silently almost into the garden—women with babes carried high upon their shoulders as you see them in the Bible pictures, and grave Brahmins who walked like princes, full of a cultured enjoyment of the garden, of the guelder rose in her bloom, and the Persian lilacs whose day was nearly over.

The noon quiet was made musical by the birds, the crooning ring-dove, the ecstatic bulbul, the oriole fluting his liquid note as he flew in flashes of gold from tree to tree. Upon the clover-scattered grass the hoopoes strutted, and the cock-sparrows danced in tense blandishments before their loves. The head gardener rose from his labours at the prescribed hours, and stood, and knelt, and lay prostrate upon his face in prayer, and the sound of his voice audibly conversing with his God was mingled with the rushing of the waters and the plashing of the fountains.

* * *

The colour note of this garden is green and purple;

its character majestic. Its proportions so noble that, notwithstanding the high mountains and precipices that rise so far above it, it conveys itself the sense of dignity and greatness. It has an air of Versailles, as of former majesty; but more human, as majesty is in the East. Yet it has many intimate and lovely haunts as well, as every garden should have.

To me, as I sat here, it seemed above all this to offer that exquisite something that an old-world garden in England has to bestow upon its votaries—upon that one day of summer that attains perfection.

Yet as I sat here and brooded upon the loveliness of the garden, I learnt that there was yet one thing lacking to it. Such an Eden, I realised, was not made for Man to walk in alone; and had I failed to discover this for myself, old Ronsard, who lay beside me upon the grass, would have brought the knowledge to my ear. Moreover, there was the Spirit of the garden. This garden was destined by him who made it for a place of pleasure, and the soul which animated him haunts it still. It offers perfection, but only to one who will consent to share it with another.

Towards sunset I took the *shikara* and made a little tour of the inner lake, where the rich lotus blooms in her season and reeds and lilies give shelter at all times to water-hens and the small

lake terns. Here I found their eggs laid upon the surface of the lake. A thunderstorm came drifting over the valley and the castle of Hara Parbat, making marvellous pictures of light and shadow and filling the reeds with wind. Yet the little terns rode secure upon their lily leaves, and their eggs lay exposed without harm to the elements. The young Moon shone above the dark fragments of cloud, her image trembling in the water. By the pier-head, where the waters of the garden fall in music into the lake, rows of earnest Moslems stood concluding their day's enjoyment in reverent prayer, their faces lit by the gathering storm. Along the road behind them passed the goatherds with their silky flocks, on their way to the mountain pastures. Grey her-

ons flew with slow rhythmic beat of wings between sky and water. Wonderful colours played upon the high cliffs, whose image was reflected in the sombre waters. Many boats, laden with those who were returning to the city, made their way across the lake to the slow plashing of their oars. A few still lingered by the pier under the dark shadows of the chinar-trees, and far into the night the flames of their cooking-fires glinted across the dark surface of the lake, and the sound of their singing in unison was borne above the stillness.

Here and there only a man sat alone, motionless, looking out into the darkling night, lost in contemplation, his heart filled with the mystery of life.

CHASMA SHAHI.

A summer dawn in Kashmir is a lovely thing, like a piece of music or some frail yet immortal verse. It comes in a wave of primrose over the peaks, and is followed by a divine radiance, as of heliotrope inspired with life, or the awakening of a soul, and then by the sword-like glitter of Day, passing with the hours into a faint and misty remoteness. On the lake itself are deep shadows and reflections, the silver gleam of oars, the glint of white stakes, the stooping forms of the weed-gatherers outlined darkly

against the morning. The quay lies empty, and the last of the pleasure-seekers is stealing across the water in his boat, back to the toil of the city.

My own destination is the Chasma Shahi, or Royal Fountain, and I drive along the barred highway, with its tall poplars like a regiment in line, in the incomparable freshness of the morning. We presently come to an orchard, in which I am fain to pause and gather a handful of cherries. For "the cherry," wrote the Emperor Jahangir in his

memoirs, "*is a fruit of pleasant flavour, and one can eat more of it than of other fruits. I have in a day eaten up a hundred and fifty of them*"; an example that I am willing to emulate upon this fine summer morning. And again: "*There was an abundance of cherries on the trees, each of which looked as it were a round ruby, hanging like globes upon the branches,*" which seemed to me a just observation.

At the Chasma Shahi the Emperor built a pavilion, and laid out a little Persian garden with fountains and waterfalls, in terraces lifted high above each other; and here one may still pass a day of enjoyment, and drink of the spring which gushes forth with the same purity and unfailing abundance as it did in his day. The old buildings with their Mogul grace have passed away beyond recognition, and newer and less worthy ones built by the Maharajahs of Kashmir have taken their place; but the beauty and seclusion of the spot survive. Here was never any pomp or ceremonial, but a place of exquisite repose; and it continues to this day, haunted as of old by the Divinity of the Spring, and overlooked by mountains whose plumes are as the iridescent sheen of a peacock. Yet the place has a wistfulness for the memories it holds of the emperor and his wife, his brilliant and devoted Nur Jahan.

Outside the wild-rose blooms,

the ploughman calls as of yore to his toiling steers; but for the Great, a glory has departed, and you feel this at the little garden in its loneliness on the hillside.

Some way from it and very near the splendour of the Nishat Bagh, there is another such, called the Chashma Hussain. It also has its spring and pool of pellucid water, its traces of old water-courses and fretted stones, half buried in the fields; but no one seems to know who Hussain was. Some say he was a merchant from Ispahan, and others that he was a noble of the Court. It matters little. The water is there, and the green grass, and the wind blows as of old in the boughs of the great chinars that shadow it by the road.

Towards evening I leave for the Nasim Bagh, the sun blazing on the lake. Boats in its light glowing like brass and doubled in the water, steal away, their colours fading with the sun into the violet shadows; while others move like black velvet hearses carrying some dead man to his grave. The sun at last sinks behind the yellow gilt-edged hills, and the whole circle of the lake gleams with prismatic colours. The high crests of the Pir Pansal have that remote and crystal air, as of great jewels beyond human attainment; and the benediction of evening settles upon the water, like the peace which comes when life is over and passion is stilled.

THE NASIM BAGH.

Subah Dar Bagh-i-Nishat.
O Sham Dar Bagh-i-Nasim.
 Morning at the Nishat Bagh.
 Evening at the Nasim.

The Nasim is the antithesis of the Nishat Bagh, not only as the couplet suggests, but in its sentiment. For while the Nishat with its rushing waters and sparkling fountains is still in the pride of life, the Nasim is as a place overtaken by serene yet extreme old age. Its air is as of an Indian summer, and an old red ox I saw there, basking and dozing in the sun at the foot of an aged chinar, seemed to me to embody its character. The spirit of the garden might have entered into him and taken form.

The first of the Mogul gardens of Kashmir, it was laid out by the great Akbar, within reach of his new city and castle of Nawanagar. It is now no more a garden, but a beautiful old park, with deep glades through which the sunlight and shadow fall upon its velvet sward. It has in its grand way a touch of Magdalen deer-park, but it is less a work of Art; for one can measure its proportions and see right through it now to the mauve waters of the lake, and to the snow-spangled mountains beyond. The trees, still beautiful, are old and dying. Most of them are hollow, and their central trunks, if you look upward into the green majesty of their boughs, are black and withered, their life prolonging itself for a space in the great

lateral branches—like the Empire in its decline.

Its old containing walls that shut out the vulgar world have all but disappeared. You can trace them here and there, and their great foundations by the lake. Its fountains and conduits, its pavilions and belvederes, its gardens of roses, narcissus, and lilac, have passed into soft swelling mounds and grassy hollows.

The park lies open, a beautiful and ancient woodland, through which the lake breezes blow, making it the very abode of serene and tranquil peace, while its white iris clusters lend it an ethereal and almost a feminine charm. Nightingales sing in it, and doves murmur; rooks make their homes in its hollow trees, and the little sparrows feed undisturbed upon its lawns. Kites wheel above it in the blue bays and estuaries of sky. The cattle of the countryside wander through its glades, and sheep browse upon its herbage; while upon days of festival, and since it has long ceased to be the exclusive haunt of an Emperor which it were death to trespass upon, long files of the village people drift across it to the neighbouring Ziarat of Hazrat Bal.

It is become a place to idle in, to ruminate in on the passing show and vanity of life. It

makes no active claim upon one's senses, or upon the wells of one's surprise. It is a place of Benedictions, chanting softly in undertones its *Nunc Dimittis*; a place for those who have turned the sunny side of the hill, and see before them the

long shadowy vale of evening with its quiet joys and subdued enjoyments; a beautiful mellow old place such as one might come upon in an ancient corner of England. Hence much loved by the English.

May it rest in peace!

HAZRAT BAL.

How different is the scene at Hazrat Bal when the people are gathered together there for the festival of the Prophet's hair!

Far as one can see across the waters the boats are gathering; and every vantage-point along the shore, where willows and chinars yield shelter from the blinding sun, is closely packed with the prows of their boats, each laden with its pilgrims and holiday-makers from the city. Many are bedecked with embroidered rugs and cushions, upon which friends sit together in harmony, with silver *huguahs* and musical instruments, and samovars and little cups of tea. The boats are bright with the faces of children, and in the humbler ones there are women to add their charm; while here and there a courtesan with her brazen glance and red lips makes way in her boat through the assembled crowd. The women of the upper classes stay sadly at home.

Before the Ziarat, in its great court under the chinar-trees, a dense crowd is gathered for prayer, and there is scarcely room to stir. It is a quiet and orderly congregation which

falls automatically into serried lines, which culminate in those who are assembled upon the platform of the shrine, about the gilded litter in which is visible the person of the high priest. Within, there are lights gleaming amidst the stately columns of cedar which support the roof of the Ziarat. At intervals of space amidst the kneeling multitude there stand eloquent preachers, whose purpose it is to address them in the articles of their faith and to lead them in song.

The climax is reached when the whole mass of people rises and bends its head to the dust. In wonderful unison these waves of humanity rise and fall, as though inspired by but one volition. It is a strange and stirring sight, here, in the hot sunlight and under the whispering shade of the great chinar-trees. And when the service is over and the Prophet's hair is held aloft, a milk-white dust ascends like incense from the soles of those who strain forward for a glimpse of the priceless relic, hiding the multitude from sight.

* * *

At six o'clock in the evening I moved with the people across

the silver-grey water to the Shalimar. There were numberless boats upon the lake, and there was the sound of plashing oars, of voices singing, and of a people out for a holiday. The bright colours of the *shikaras*, with their pink and red and orange awnings, were reflected in the water, and the scene was one of the brightest animation. Our approach lay through shallow marshy waters, lined with pollard willows and covered with green scum, and it seemed an ignoble one to an imperial garden—markedly inferior to that which takes one to the threshold of the Nishat Bagh. Its effect was of concealment, as if from fear. This cannot have been so in the days of Jahangir.

The canal became gradually well-defined and bordered by stately chinars as we neared the garden; but here again the rice-fields of the peasantry had encroached upon its dignity. In bygone days this narrow water must have been the scene of many a splendid ceremonial, and many a nobleman must have come slowly up it in his barge, with a superb equipment, but fear at his heart lest he should fail in the presence of Majesty.

Even now something might be done to restore the beauty of this approach, by extending the avenue, sweeping the canal of its weeds, and restoring its brick foundations. The grass track might be laid afresh, and flowers planted beside it, while weeping willows might be made to take the place of the ugly pollards at the marshy

junction of the canal with the waters of the lake. The outer walls and gates of the garden might be renewed. . . .

It was not till I reached the Diwan-i-Khas of Shah Jahan, that the dignity of the garden fell upon me and I ceased to question its fame. Here the black and green marbles were superb; and even in the dusk I could trace the amphitheatre of crags and mountains, and the snow-capped peak of Mahadeo, which carry its beauty to a triumphant conclusion. Yet withal, this garden, this far-famed Shalimar, suggested to me a Pleasaunce rather than an Imperial residence—which at one time it was. Its terraces, I could see, rose gently and almost imperceptibly above each other. It was a place, I thought, for a king to be happy in—to walk in with some lovely woman, to feast in of summer nights with his intimate friends, even to receive in with some state and splendour when his obligations made it imperative that his leisure should be invaded; but it did not give me the impression of a stately garden like the Nishat.

Its past seemed to linger in all that I saw before me, and the Shalimar, I thought, revealed the life of Jahangir and Nur Mahal—his light of the palace—of the indolent, artistic, and pleasure-loving Emperor, who would have given up the whole of his mighty empire were Kashmir but left to him; who placed the keys of his Majesty in the fair hands of a woman; who wrote couplets

upon a sudden inspiration, and fell into ecstasies over the glow and beauty of a cherry given to him to eat; who became intoxicated with wine o' nights, and went to bed in tears—yet was withal a king. Here, as it

seemed to me, was not the Versailles of a Louis Quatorze, but the garden of a Prince who was, above all, a lover, and of a Man through whose temperament ran the thread of an ineffective genius.

THE SHALIMAR.

"I ordered a stream to be diverted, so that a garden might be made, such that in beauty and sweetness there should not be in the inhabited world another like it."—*Memoirs of Jahangir*.

Un des plus beaux jours de ma vie, as old Marbot would have said; for upon this day I saw the Shalimar at its best. The garden was thronged with the holiday-folk from yesterday's festival, the fountains were playing, and its stream, "like a river of Paradise," was here as tranquil as a summer's noon—there a cascade of silver quivering with light and animation as it fell in thunderous music into the shining pools.

The garden was indeed full of music this day: music of waters, music of doves, music of the little skylarks singing in the cages brought with them by the city people—music of the free nightingale high up in the green-gold tracery of the chinar-trees—music of children's voices and of those of the artistic, pleasure-loving crowd, who know so well how to enjoy so exquisite a place.

What perfect groups they made here by the silvery waters and under the shady trees! Here was one, a circle of friends playing cards upon the edge of the pool that surrounds the black marble of Shah Jahan's pavilion, and upon the fringe

of a lawn that was snow-white with daisies. They were so careful not to impinge upon its beauty.

Upon the flagged edge of the soft canal, resting their arms upon a carved pedestal of imperial days, were two little girls in blue and green, with the grace in miniature of grown women—poetic, with the unconsciousness of childhood in their forms and attitudes, gazing wistfully into the deeps where the waters sprang into the pool below. Upon the corner of a terrace that was hung with roses, and shaded by a dark cypress-tree, sat one who might have been old Omar himself, so tranquil and meditative was his figure, as of one who would see in the flowing stream the passing of life, and in the roses, as their petals fell and died, its brief conclusion.

Here upon the enamelled grass a rare group of women sat, with their babes about them, the rich colours of their garments reflected in the olive water with a thousand scintillations; here friends and associates climbed the garden stairs

haud-in-hand, as you might see them in some picture of an old Persian garden; here one sat alone under the swaying boughs of a plane-tree ineffably happy in the singing of his bird above him. A look of sympathetic delight lay upon his face; and when to test him I asked him if he would sell it, he replied, "Oh, never, sir! it is my Love, my *Ashik*, the joy of my heart." So it was, and when he took it away an hour later, he enveloped its cage in yet another cover of flowered chintz, while he drew a third from under his robe, to show me the extent of his solicitude.

Here were groups like Abraham and his posterity about the base of a great chinara that has seen 300 years of life.

If trees could speak, what might these superb creatures, whose hospitality we enjoy and pass on, tell us of the wonders of this garden and of the passions it has known!

For there are some here that knew the Mogul Empire in its prime; that grew in the days of Jahangir and Nur Mahal, and lent their shade to the magnificent Shah Jahan. Every yard of this garden is filled with memories of some of the mightiest and the loveliest of this earth. Their names and their fame remain; but of their blood only a few survive—some in exile beyond the seas, and others in poverty amidst the dust of those sun-tortured plains. . . .

But the humble survive; and an old gardener told me that as far back as his family had any recollection they had

worked upon the soil of the Shalimar, drawing no pay; *adscriptes glebæ*.

"In the days of Shah Jahan, the Padishah," he said, "900 gardeners were employed at the Shalimar, but now we are only 21."

This old man was full of wisdom and a sort of gentle philosophy. In the course of his ministrations he swept away a whole field of daisies that blossomed before me.

"You deserve to be hanged," I suggested.

He smiled benevolently, and replied, "So be it, Huzur; but you will have to bring me back to life again, for in ten days they will be more plentiful than ever." . . .

The city folk who come here for a holiday deeply appreciate the beauty and charm of the Shalimar. None ever commits an offence against good taste, and hence it comes that there are no "Verboten." Trespassers are not warned to keep off the grass, and there is no head-gardener with a sour face, or policeman to keep the law.

So it came that I also was at liberty to bring my books and a chair, and sit all day in the garden, even to the extent of having my meals served there from the boat beyond the walls, as if it were my own.

These things are possible here in this garden of a dead emperor, because the people who use it from generation to generation have the priceless gift of refinement in all that constitutes the amenities of life. When they come here

they become a part of the garden, and when they have gone the garden smiles on as if they had never been. Think of Hampstead after a bank holiday!

* * *

Evening had now come, and the last ray of sunlight had gone with the last of the pleasure-seekers. A wonderful peace descended upon the Shalimar. Its fountains were stilled, and its great cascades no longer filled the pavilions with their music as of the sea. But the birds still sang on—the murmuring doves and the ecstatic nightingale—and the after-glow of the sunset flushed the mountain crags that overlook the garden with indescribable madder and rose, while Mahadeo soared up with the lustre of a dolomite peak. The waters still lingered in the pools about Shah Jahan's pavilion, still as a mirror; and in their shallow depths were reflected the black marble and finished grace of a bygone day, and the drooping foliage of this season's chinars.

Ronsard—I continued to find in Ronsard verses suited to this exquisite spot. . . .

I passed out by a wicket beyond the garden walls, where is the little stream to which it owes its life. The high aqueduct of imperial days, which bore it loftily across the countryside, is no longer used, and the present channel fittingly follows a more lowly course, through the fields and hamlets of the people, which it waters when not required at the Shalimar. Here the heredi-

tary gardeners have their freeholds, and in the twilight across their acres I could see their burying-places white with iris. Here, as ever in the East, I found that sharp contrast between the common world and the splendid seclusion of the great. On one side of the garden wall, Nature, brutal and harsh as in the plains of India, gentle and unadorned as here; on the other, Art, inspired by the enthusiasm and splendour of an imperial race.

Long after the darkness had fallen, and the birds had ceased to sing, and the stars had begun to shine, I found the hereditary gardeners at work, by lamplight, transplanting their flowers in the cool night, and irrigating the grassy spaces. The waters of the canal continued also to run, though the stream was cut off, and the cascades in the lower garden to murmur; for the great reservoirs take several hours to empty themselves.

I dined in the south colonnade of Shah Jahan's pavilion, whose marble still retained the warm and vital glow of the sunlight that had beaten upon it, long after the chill of night had fallen; and for an hour after that I sat by the pool's edge under the green marble pillars of the northern colonnade, facing the serrated mountains and the white peaks. So bright was the starlight that the mountain-wall was almost luminous, and the snow-fields of Mahadeo were clearly visible as such, yet wrapped in the mystery of the

nights, and set as it were with the stars for jewels. I could see reflected in the waters the dark forms of the cypresses and the hosts of Heaven, and as I looked the earth moved and the constellations rose in the vault above me, and new stars emerged from moment to moment into vision.

Afar off, outside the garden walls, I could hear the rippling music of the stream and the voices of the night in such undertones as commonly pass for stillness; and when a light passed at the far end of the garden—a small thing flickering like a glow-worm—its reflections lit up the beautiful tracery on the pedestals of the marble columns, so polished was their surface.

The mystery of the Night enveloped me, and the life of Shah Jahan rose up before my eyes, so that I saw in

the darkness the gleam of his tents, the silken awnings over this his summer pavilion, the light in his inner chamber, a frail boat upon the canal below the pavilion, rich carpets upon the floor, and heavy curtains of velvet between the side rooms and the central chamber. I saw the magnificent emperor rise from his couch and look out upon the jewelled night, his mind vexed with some political anxiety while his soul rejoiced in the splendour of the firmament above him. His face was the face of an emperor, but of an artist; as sensitive as it was proud and imperious, and lit with the high vision of the creative mind. He had made more exquisite his father's Shalimar; he was yet to accomplish, through the gateways of sorrow, the masterpiece of the world.

A TARIFF REFORMER OF 1713.

AMONG a bundle of pamphlets, yellow with the age of two centuries, I have discovered a most interesting treatise by a veritable tariff reformer of Queen Anne's reign. He wrote, moreover, by a strange coincidence, to give his ideas on the very same questions which again confront us to-day—how best to re-establish and control trade after the war.

No Imperial Conference could then be called to decide the Empire's after-the-war policy; for a few scattered islands, some sparsely settled Plantations in America, and the precariously held possessions of the East India Company, then alone represented the now world-wide British Empire. To-day, such are the complications involved, that, with peace still far off, it is yet judged needful to discuss the thorny question. Two hundred years ago it was different. Peace had actually to be signed before the subject was allowed to be mooted. Hardly, though, were the signatures dry which ratified the Treaty of Utrecht, when the printer at the Dolphin in Little Britain published the pamphlet on 'General Maxims on Trade,' to which I refer.

The original owner of the copy in my possession was a certain Edward Tenison, who has inscribed his name, together with numerous MS. notes, on the fly-leaf; and the fact that the pamphlet belonged to him may, I think,

be taken as a sufficient guarantee of the reliability of the unknown author, for the Rev. Edward Tenison's good opinion carried weight. A nephew of the reigning Primate, Tenison was himself a prebendary of Canterbury and Archdeacon of Caermarthen, and, after the accession of George I., became chaplain to the first Hanoverian Prince of Wales. Account-books in my possession show also that the worthy divine had a practical knowledge of farming; while his residence in Norfolk, then centre of the wool trade, had besides, judging from his notes on the subject, given him a personal acquaintance with the manufacture of cloth. Tenison died Bishop of Ossory in 1735.

Ever since Tudor times Parliament had laboured to promote the wool industry, passing innumerable laws for its encouragement. When the Maxims on Trade were published, though some had lapsed, the edict of Charles II., forbidding burial to his loyal subjects except in shrouds of wool, was still in force; and during Queen Anne's reign the duty on manufactured woollen had been again raised. Like many other British industries, the wool trade had been brought to perfection by the skill of war refugees. It is therefore not surprising to find the Bishop of Norwich, soon after the occupation of Mons, which followed Marlborough's victory

of Malplaquet, recalling former services rendered by foreigners to the wool manufacture of Norwich. The bishop's letter pleading for the employment of the "distressed Palatine Protestants," who had fled to England from the persecutions of Louis XIV., was read in all the churches of the diocese.

It would seem that the jealousy of the labouring classes, precursor of the Trade Unions of to-day, had for long prevented such wretched refugees from working on the land, although, as one preacher said, "Ye great Dearth of men to supply ye necessary occasions of soldiers and seamen has been such, that ye very last harvest is a sufficient conviction of ye want of hands to carry on ye public affairs."

Happily during the wars of the early eighteenth century, bad seasons alone could bring about a shortage of food in Great Britain, for she was self-supporting. Consequently, one great argument for free trade did not exist; and we find the merchants of that time clamouring for more and more protectionist duties, for reasons thus summarised:—

"All the Nations of Europe seem to strive who shall outwit one another in point of trade, and they concur in this maxim, that the less they consume of foreign commodities the better it is for them. The Dutch, to obviate too great a consumption of foreign goods amongst them, make use of excises, and they have, for that reason, laid a very high excise on French wines. The French study to prevent it, by duties of importations, duties on consumptions, tolls from one Province into another, by strict visitations, restraints and prohibitions, and by the example of the Court in wearing their own manu-

factures. We have of late years saved a great deal of money by laying high duties upon foreign commodities, which hath not only hindered their too great consumption among us, but hath had this good effect besides, that it hath given encouragement to the settling, improvement, and perfectionating many useful manufactures in Great Britain, so that we must be out of our senses if we permit the import of manufactures to the prejudice and destruction of our own."

The pamphleteer, moreover, not content with generalities, enters minutely into the conditions of each separate industry, and, being the most important, the manufacture of wool comes naturally first in the list.

The benefit of "sending abroad our Yorkshire cloth, Colchester bays, Exeter serges, Norwich stuffs, &c.," is acknowledged, because, "being made purely of British wool, as much as those exports amount to, so much is the clear gain to the nation." Again, the free import of Spanish wool for home manufacture is commended as very beneficial; in fact, the writer on trade would, he owns, like to see all raw materials imported without duty, such as hemp, flax, and "grogram-yarn, and raw-silk and other goods brought from Turkey."

Though strictly practical, the quaint old pamphleteer does not forget to chastise the national conceit; though "we outdid," said he, "in our own thoughts all the world in the woollen manufactures," it was fortunate that high duties had been laid on foreign goods, some even being prohibited altogether, "for else the French would have made our hearts to ache since the peace, by their

great importation of woollen goods upon us."

French woollen goods, he asserts, were "goodness for goodness, cheaper than ours. Their cloth is made of Spanish wool, which," he maintained, "is brought to great perfection and sold in the shops for sixteen or seventeen livres the ell (which is a yard, a quarter, and an inch), and as a French livre is exactly worth one of our shillings, they sell the ell there as cheap as we sell here the yard, which is twenty-five per cent difference."

The ability of France to sell cloth made from imported wool, at a less price than that manufactured in Britain from home-grown wool, is explained in this way: "The French did always outdo us in price of labour. Their common people live upon roots, cabbage, and other herbage; four of their large provinces subsist entirely upon chestnuts; and the best of them eat barley, millet, turkey, and black corn; so that their wages used to be small in comparison with ours. But of late years their crown-pieces being made of the same value as ours, and raised from sixty to one hundred sols; and the manufacturers, servants, soldiers and day-labourers, and other working people, earning no more sols or pence by the day than they did formerly, the price of labour is thereby so much lessened, that one may affirm for truth, they have generally their work done for half the price we pay for ours."

The cost of the necessities of life in the two countries is next contrasted. "For although pro-

visions were as dear at Paris as at London, 'tis certain that in most of their provinces they buy beef and mutton for half the price we pay for it here."

How absurdly little to our ideas the price of French meat must then have been, can be easily estimated from some household accounts kept by an English country squire of the period. For beef, he sets down no more than threepence a pound, while eighteenpence was all that was paid for a neck of mutton weighing 7 lb. 2 oz. The price of bread is not given, but with wheat standing at sixteen shillings the quarter, it could not have been what we should now call an extravagant one.

The pamphleteer draws withering comparisons between the wasteful manner of life of his own countrymen and the sober frugality of their French neighbours.

"The price of wheat and meat," he avers, "doeth little concern the poor [French] manufacturers, as they generally drink nothing but water, and at best a sort of liquor they call *beverage* (which is water passed through the husks of grapes after the wine is drawn off), they save a great deal on that account, for it is well known that our people spend half their money on drink. The army," he continues, enlarging on this theme, "is a notorious instance of how cheap the French can live. It enables their King to maintain 300,000 men with the same money we maintain 112,500. Their pay being five sols a day (which is exactly threepence *English*), and our soldiers pay is eightpence."

The rate of army pay here given is noteworthy, for though nominally less, it was, in reality, on account of the then far greater purchasing power of money, considerably more than Tommy Atkins' shilling of to-day. The pay of Queen Anne's soldiers was, in fact, ample, judged by the shilling, which was then the standard wage for one day's farm labour, without board and lodging, or the five yearly pounds demanded by men-servants, who could, if they so wished, leave service and hire a good-sized farm for little more than double that sum. A gentleman was then able to send his son to any preparatory school for £16 a year—while, strange anomaly, the wig, without which he could not be seen, cost anything from one guinea to five pounds. Alas! as it is in 1917, so it was in 1713—the price of raiment as well as that of food had to be considered in reckoning up a family's yearly expenses. Proportionately, too, it was much higher than is even the cost of dress in these expensive days. Twenty pounds was the customary sum paid by a lady for her board and lodging, but, be it noted, she set down nearly thirty in her accounts for her "Cloathes." And this last item, as will be seen, was a modest computation; eight pounds eight being paid for another lady's "suit of cloathes," and six pounds fourteen shillings and threepence given to obtain the loose house gown then in fashion. Men's dress also was proportionally expensive—the materials only,

for a coat and waistcoat, cost one gentleman more than seven pounds.

With the price of materials, nearly all of British make, so high, it is no wonder that the merchants of 1713 were much concerned over the threatened flooding of the British market with Continental goods. "That trade," asserts the pamphlet, "is eminently bad which supplies the same goods as we manufacture ourselves, especially if we can make enough for our consumption, and I take this to be the case of the silk manufacture, which is brought to great perfection in London, Canterbury, and other places. Since the late French wars it is increased to a mighty degree, Spittlefields alone manufacturing to the value of two million a year, and were daily improving, till the late fears about lowering the French duties. What a pity," laments the far-sighted writer, "that so noble a manufacture, so extensive and so beneficial to an infinite number of people, should run the hazard of being ruined. 'Tis, however, to be feared that if the French can import their wrought silk upon easy terms, they out-do us so much in cheapness of labour, as has been already shewed, and they have Italian and Levant raw silk upon so much easier terms than we, besides great quantities of their own in Languedoc, Provence, and other provinces, that in all probability half the looms in Spittlefields would be laid down, and our ladies again clothed in French silks: the loss that would accrue to the nation by so great a mischief

cannot be valued at less than £500,000 a year."

In making this mournful prognostication the pamphleteer apparently overlooked the power of the legislature to meddle even with such delicate affairs as ladies' fashions. For instance, cotton, muslins, and chintzes—or painted calico as it was then called—had been more or less "the Mode" ever since their introduction from India in 1631. In 1700, their popularity having so greatly increased, Parliament actually forbade the import of cotton and muslin; the beauty and cheapness of the Indian manufactures interfering, it was thought, with the sale of British linen and silk. However, so "modish" were the products of India, that as soon as the total prohibition was withdrawn, fashionable dames again sallied forth in gaily "painted calico"; and so much was it patronised that in 1721 Parliament once more had to step in, this time interdicting the cherished fashion altogether.

But to return to the pamphlet. Silk was not the only British industry threatened by the Peace of 1713. The manufacture of white paper, an art then in its infancy in England, appears to have been menaced with almost total extinction. Some twenty years before, a coarse sort of brownish paper was the only kind made in Britain, and in 1690 an Act had been passed for its protection. This Act, be it noted, was a necessary as well as a prudent measure, for Dutch William's war with France had then cut off most of our

foreign supplies. White paper before that time had been imported from France and Holland to the value of £100,000 annually. Fortunately, however, for England in the time of her necessity, it happened, as it had so often happened before, that French refugees, skilled in the trade, stepped into the breach, and white paper manufacture was set agoing in Britain. Luckily again for the infant industry, the eleven years of the "War of Succession" gave it time to grow, with the result thus commented on by the pamphlet—

"Since the high duties laid on foreign paper, and that none hath been imported from France, where 'tis cheapest, the making of it is increased to such a degree in England, that we import none of the lower sorts from abroad and make them all ourselves; but should the French duties be taken off, undoubtedly most of the mills which are employed in the making of white paper must leave off their work, and £30,000 to £40,000 a year be remitted over to France for the commodity."

France, it appears, undersold us, for it continues—

"In the paper manufacture abundance of people are employed for sorting rags in the mills, who earn in France but two sols a day, which is less than five farthings of our money, and the price paid here for such work is four pence a day."

Another home industry, threatened by the Peace of 1713, is thus touched on—

"The manufacture of paper is very near akin to that of linen," continues the pamphleteer, "and linen is an article of more consequence than most people are aware of: Ireland, Scotland, and several large counties in England, have made large steps towards the improvement of that useful manufacture, both in quantity and quality, and with good encouragement would

doubtless in a few years bring it to perfection, and perhaps make sufficient for our own consumption, which, besides employing great numbers of people and improving many acres of land, would save us a good sum of money which is yearly laid out abroad in that commodity. As the case stands at present, it improves daily; but if the duties on French linen be reduced, 'tis to be feared it will come over so cheap that our looms must be laid aside, and £600,000 or £700,000 a year be sent over to France for that commodity."

"A trade," continues the writer, "may be called good which exchanges manufacture for manufacture, and commodities for commodities. Germany takes as much in value of our woollen goods as we do of their linen; by this means numbers of people are employed on both sides to their mutual advantage. An importation of commodities," he continues, "bought partly for money and partly for goods," may be of national advantage, especially if the commodities, as in the case of East India goods, are imported for exportation.

Tea, one of the chief of our then East Indian imports, stood at that time, according to accounts in my possession, at eighteen shillings a pound, and had been some years earlier as high as sixty shillings a pound. It was one of England's chief exports to the Plantations of America.

It is amusing to find in the pamphlet of 1713 the importation of "mere luxuries" inveighed against, and with the Prime Minister's words on the present restriction of imports still ringing in our ears, we cannot but sympathise with the Queen Anne Worthy when he

denounces them "as so much loss as they amount to, to the nation." Wine is the chief of the imports he declaims against, pronouncing it "to be highly pernicious to this nation." For all that, our friend is no teetotalter, for it is on account of the mercenary grounds that, "if the duties were lowered," it would cost the country yearly as much as £450,000, that he condemns it.

Spirits he has no objection to, either for financial or moral reasons. As for brandy, "since we have laid high duties on it," he writes, "the distilling of spirits from malt and molasses is much improved and increased, by means of which a good sum of money is yearly saved to the nation; for very little brandy hath been imported either from Italy, Portugal or Spain. But as French brandy is esteemed, and is indeed very good, if the extraordinary duty on that liquor be taken off, there's no doubt but great quantities will be imported. We'll suppose only 3000 tons a year, which will cost Great Britain about £70,000 yearly, and prejudice besides the extracts of our own malt spirits."

Until Germany's piratical U-boat campaign had made such a sight impossible, dwellers on the coasts of England were accustomed to see a constant stream of Scandinavian vessels arriving at our seaports laden with wood, their unwieldy cargo giving them the appearance of so many huge rafts. They come no more, and Britain is forced to fall back upon her own stock of timber; mercifully a few preserves, untouched

since the last great war, are still left to her. For England, grown careless in her fancied security, had too long neglected her timber. Oddly enough the country was labouring under the same disadvantage during the long wars of the early eighteenth century, and was, strange to say, relying on the same sources of foreign supply. During a war it was then computed that the Navy required at least 40,000 full-grown trees annually, and the merchant fleet wellnigh as much. Fortunately in Queen Anne's reign no under-sea pirates existed, and the timber ships sailed safely into British ports. The vital nature of this traffic is revealed by a significant admission in the old pamphlet—

"When there is a necessity to import goods which a nation cannot be without, although such goods are chiefly purchased with money, it cannot be accounted bad trade; as our trade with Norway and other parts, from whence are imported naval stores and building materials."

At that time, by the way, merchant ships were armed as a matter of course, as much though against the Algerine corsairs as for self-protection against enemy vessels.

"Letting ships to freight to other nations" was another method of trade which recommended itself to the pamphleteer. "Our ships," he remarks, "are often thus employed between Portugal, Italy, and the Levant." The archaic way of exchanging commodities for commodities, he also admits to be beneficial, if for like value

on both sides; but the form of trading he cannot away with, is a method that obtained before the war then but just ended, between England and France. "Our ships," he complains, "went constantly in ballast (except now and then for some lead) to St Malo, Morlaix, Nantes, Bourdeaux, Bayonne, &c., and ever came back full of linen, wines, brandy, and paper. And if it was so before the Revolution, when one of our pounds sterling cost the French but thirteen livres, what are they like to take from us (except what they of necessity want) now that for each pound sterling they must pay us twenty livres, which enhances the price of all British commodities to the French above fifty per cent?"

After the Peace of Utrecht, the French, as the pamphlet informs us, "limited the importation of our cloth to three places, subjected it to strict visitations, as well as placing a high duty on it," and yet at the same time it was admitted that they could afford to sell their own cloth at cheaper rates than the cloth imported from England. How was this? The answer comes in this wise:

"By the long interruption of commerce and correspondence between the two nations, the French knew as little of the price of our commodities as we did of theirs; and being extremely jealous of their manufactures, they would not give way to any, the least thing that could prejudice them. In short, they had a mind to be secured against all events." "We are now, God be praised," piously

exclaims the pamphleteer, "in peace and friendship with France. We have a free intercourse with them, and they do and will take from us what they want, and 'tis all we can expect and desire from them."

So far so good. But trade jealousy was not confined to France. "The French, knowing the advantage they have over us in point of cheapness, he asserts, will give us leave to import into France not only woollen goods, but all other commodities whatsoever, upon very easy duties, provided we permit them to import into Great Britain wines, brandies, silks, linen, and paper, upon paying the same duties as others do. And when," he shrewdly points out, "that is done you will send little more to France than now you do, and they will import into Britain ten times more than now they can." Our superfluities, he declared—such as lead, copperas, tin, leather, coals, allum, and several other things of small value, as also some of our Plantation commodities—they will have, "whether we take any of theirs or no, because," said the keen old trader, "they want them"; adding astutely, "as they were supplied with them during the war by way of Italy and Flanders, and paid us a little more money for them than now they do. To sum up all: if we pay to France yearly—

For their wines . . .	£450,000
For their brandies . . .	70,000
For their linen . . .	600,000
For their paper . . .	30,000
For their silks . . .	500,000
	£1,650,000

And they take from us in lead, tin, leather, allum, copperas, coals, horn-plates, &c., and Plantation goods to the value of	£200,000
Great Britain loses by the balance of that trade yearly	1,450,000

"To bring what hath been already said into a narrow compass, it may be reduced to this, viz :

That the exportation of manufactures is in the highest degree beneficial to a nation.

That the importation of foreign materials to be manufactured by us instead of importing manufactured goods is the saving a great deal of money.

That the exportation of superfluities is so much clear gain.

That the exchanging of commodities for commodities is generally an advantage.

That all imports of goods which are re-exported leave a real advantage.

That the letting of ships to freight to other nations is profitable.

That the import of things of absolute necessity cannot be esteemed bad.

That the importing of commodities of mere luxury is so much loss as they amount to.

That the importation of such goods as hinder the consumption of our own, or check the progress of any of our manufactures, is a visible disadvantage and necessarily tends to the ruin of a multitude of people."

Thus the acute trader tabulates the contents of his pamphlet, and careful to leave nothing to chance, concludes by giving detailed instructions concerning a subject much neglected in our own commerce to-day—namely, "the weights, measures, customs and monies of which those who deal with another nation should have a perfect knowledge. I think," he gravely adds, "the fate of Great Britain in point of trade doth in a great measure depend upon it."

KATHARINE F. DOUGHTY.

SNAKE AND MONGOOSE FIGHTS.

THE mongoose, though an animal which frequents human dwellings, and appears to have very little fear of man, is nevertheless almost impossible to tame when captured full-grown. I had several full-grown animals, and I tried putting them in an empty room with Cobras, but I soon found that there was no prospect of a fight. The snake would get into a corner of the room, and the mongoose would go round and round the walls seeking some way of escape. He would brush past the snake in the corner, and the snake would strike vigorously at him as he went by, but he made no attempt to touch the snake. I therefore got hold of a baby mongoose which rapidly became very tame, and it is mainly with this mongoose that I have made my observations. I constructed a cage of wire-netting with $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh, 3 feet high and 18 feet in circumference, and in this the fights have always taken place. The mongoose began when he was only four months old, and at first I put his mother in with him, hoping that she would tackle the snake to save her young.

I found, however, that she ignored the snake just as the other untamed mongooses had done, even when it was striking at the little one; and the only time she turned on it was once, when it somehow

impeded her, and she made a quick snap at it and threw it across the cage. The small mongoose seldom showed keenness to attack any but the smallest snakes, and would sometimes ignore them for two or three hours before he finally killed them. There appeared, however, to be some method in his patience. All snakes are terrified of a mongoose, and quickly get worn out when they are perpetually on the defensive. This applies particularly to Cobras, which, to the best of my observation, are not capable of remaining erect for very long periods.

Now about Snakes. These are easily obtainable from a kind of gipsy tribe called "Netuas," or more generally "Nuts." They are notorious thieves and criminals, but they know more about animal life inside and outside the jungles than any other tribe in this part of India. For a small reward they are always willing to bring in snakes of any description, which they catch by digging them out of their holes. When the snake appears they hold it down with a stick across the back of the neck and seize it by the tail, being particularly careful not to let the tail wind round their arm. They then run the other hand down the snake, and catch hold of it just behind the head. In this manner they can handle even the most poisonous snake with

impunity, and many of them do not hesitate to pick up a Cobra or a Karait by the tail without troubling to hold down the head at all. They are much more careful with a Karait than with a Cobra, because the Karait strikes without warning. If the Cobra is sitting up, they irritate him with a piece of cloth, or something held in the left hand, until he strikes, and the moment he is down their right hand grasps his tail. When they have the snake by the tail, they impart a vibratory motion with the hand, and the snake appears to be unable to strike up. I remember once, however, that a Nut brought a Cobra and a very large-banded Karait (*Bungarus fasciatus*, locally called Mahuri, "the poisonous one," a snake with broad black-and-gold bands in alternate stripes about one inch in width), having placed them both in the same vessel. He shook out the Cobra, and had just picked it up by the tail, when the banded Karait escaped and made off. He ran after it, trying to catch its tail with his right hand, the Cobra being suspended from his left; but this proved too much for him. I kept the Karait from escaping while he put the Cobra back in its place, and then he picked up the Karait. This brute was 5 feet 10 inches in length, and he held it out at arm's length by the tail, the head and about 1 foot of the snake's length being on the ground towards us. The snake was so still that the Nut

ceased the vibratory movement. All of a sudden the snake turned, and struck with wonderful rapidity at his foot. The man shot his arm out to its full extent and saved himself, but the snake then proceeded to climb its own body with great swiftness. It was only after we had all been thoroughly thrilled that the Nut succeeded in regaining control. His trouble was still not over, because when he put the snake head first back into the narrow neck of the earthen jar in which he kept him, the snake's head suddenly appeared again out of the jar when half his body was in, and he had a shot at the man's arm, but missed him.

I have seen Europeans handling Cobras, which are more or less slow, and cannot strike unless they first of all sit up, but I have never seen one handle a Karait, which is the quickest striker of all the snakes, and the most deadly. They strike from the ground, and it seems to be a matter of indifference to them whether they strike forwards or backwards.

Regarding Cobras, the Nut has a theory that they never strike the hand that holds them. If you hold a Cobra about a foot below the head, he will coil round your arm and sit erect on your hand; but he never attempts to strike that arm, though he would readily strike either your head or the other arm if he got the chance.

The snakes ordinarily available in this part of the world

of sufficient size to fight with the mongoose are few in number.

First of all comes the Cobra. The usual specimens are between 3 feet 6 inches and 5 feet, though I have had them up to 6 feet. They put up a good spectacular fight, but have no chance whatever against the mongoose.

Secondly comes the Karait (*Bungarus ceruleus*), called locally in the vernacular "the deaf one," since no noise appears to frighten it, and it does not, like most snakes, attempt to scuttle away when any one approaches. This snake is in dread of the mongoose. I have many times tried to provoke it to fight, but always without success, and once only have I seen it strike, though I have had specimens in the cage up to 4 feet 3½ inches long. It twists itself into a big coil like an untidy knot, and keeps its head firmly fixed underneath one of the coils. On these occasions, even if it is lifted up at the end of a stick, it will still keep its head fixed under its body so long as the mongoose is visible. I have seen my mongoose standing on the top of the coils, its hind feet almost in the Karait's mouth, scratching about with a view to getting at the head in order to bite, but the only effect is that the snake remains more rigid than before. In the end the mongoose always manages to kill the snake, but it is a poor show, and I do not recommend any one to try it.

The third snake is called

Donr (*Tropidonotus piscator*)—a speckled snake, generally black and yellow, but sometimes black and white. He is found on the banks of tanks, and generally near water, or he may be found swimming. He gives off an offensive smell when the mongoose tackles him. Usually the specimens brought to me were from 2 feet 6 inches to 3 feet 6 inches long. A short time ago I had one which was 4 feet 6½ inches long, 4¼ inches round the thickest part of the body. This was by far the largest I have ever seen. This snake is non-poisonous, but fierce, and will readily bite when disturbed. Its bite causes a nasty flesh wound, and may even take a piece out. When worried it has a peculiar mode of progression, the forward part of the body being lifted right off the ground, so that it appears to be going along in a series of jumps. The only time I ever saw the mongoose bitten by any snake was by a small one of this variety, not more than 18 inches long. It was escaping through the wire meshing, and the mongoose seized it in the middle of the back when it was about half-way through. It came back like lightning, and bit the mongoose on the side of the face. The mongoose was extraordinarily angry, and made a quick end of it.

It is noteworthy that the mongoose never tackles a snake except at the point of the tail or at the head. I do not think that he would willingly expose himself to such

an attack as he experienced on this occasion. When he springs, and his teeth penetrate through the skin, he is obviously not in a position to jump away quickly. I do not remember that I ever saw a mongoose eat a small Donr, perhaps owing to the smell to which I have referred above. The small Cobras he is very fond of, and also the small grass snakes, which are about the same size as the English grass snake. This beast is very quick, and it is a great treat to watch the mongoose quivering over the darting head. The movements are so quick that they cannot be clearly followed by the eye.

Fourthly, there is the Dhamin, or Indian rat snake (*Zamenis maculatus*). This snake is supposed to have all sorts of curious habits. Among others it is commonly reputed to climb the hind leg of a cow and suck its milk—a feat which is, of course, anatomically impossible. It is also said to put its tail into a cow's mouth and pull it out again quickly, though for what reason I do not know. A blow from its tail is popularly said to wither the part which is struck. Sometimes the markings on the front half of the body are more distinct than the other half. This has given rise to a belief that the Dhamin crosses with the Cobra; and that if the Cobra marking is on the front half of the snake's body, he is poisonous; whereas if the hinder part resembles the Cobra, he is not poisonous.

The snakes of this variety are called locally Adhbesar (*Anglicè*, "half poisonous"). The Dhamin is long but not very thick, being generally about the thickness of a Cobra. I have had them over eight feet in length, but I believe they grow longer. They are very vicious when cornered, and strike violently at the mongoose. They have also a formidable offensive weapon in their tail, which they use as though it were the lash of a whip, sweeping the mongoose off its feet. When the mongoose takes it by the head it attempts to constrict him, and with a big Dhamin the mongoose has to be wonderfully expert to extricate himself from the coils. Its coiling power, its lashing tail, and its lightning strokes with its head, combined with its vicious and aggressive temper, render this snake by far the most spectacular fighter; and no other mongoose and snake fight is, in my opinion, to be compared with that between the mongoose and the Dhamin. Throughout the preliminary stages the mongoose has to watch and wait for the violent lunges of the head and the lashing strokes of the tail—which latter he avoids very quickly by light springs from the ground on all-fours as the tail whips underneath him. In the concluding stages it would be difficult to imagine anything more clever than the manner in which the mongoose frees himself from the coils tightening round his neck or round his loins. He cannot

let go the head until he is free from the coils, and is therefore at a great disadvantage, for he has to do all the wrestling with his head firmly fixed to one spot. Sometimes he springs forward, sometimes backward, sometimes stands on his head or lies on his back. Once, with a Dhamin over eight feet long, I thought the mongoose had met his match. After a very severe and exciting tussle, when his fangs were through the snake's head, the mongoose found himself compelled to let go; and after tightening and then slackening his muscles, attempted to spring clear, only to find that the snake had a clove-hitch with the very end of the tail round his loins. The mongoose fell on his side, and would perhaps have been squeezed to death, for a snake continues to exercise great control over its muscles even when its brain has been pierced. However, the snake's head had been thoroughly damaged, and he was only able to move it slowly. The mongoose lay panting for a few seconds, and then sprang from its side on to the snake's head and worried it savagely until the muscles relaxed. The following day I saw another Dhamin with a clove-hitch round a man's wrist, and the man told me that the pressure was strong enough to cause him slight pain.

The Dhamin has one peculiarity which I have not noticed in any other snake. He growls, very much as a cat growls. At first I thought that the

mongoose was making the noise, but since then I have often heard it.

It may be noted by the way that no snake hisses. They spit, and the Indian word "phuph" is more onomatopoeic than the English "hiss." When the Dhamin is growling, his whole body swells down to the tail, and the noise is made by the expulsion of the air through the throat. The whole proceeding is curiously slow.

In a snake and mongoose fight, one's observations are liable to be handicapped by ignorance as to whether the mongoose is playing or not. Sometimes he will jump straight for the snake's head, at other times he will play with it for half an hour or more, and I have always found that the more hungry he is, the more fiercely he will fight. In fact, it is best to starve him for a day before pitting him against a snake. His hair does not stand on end while he is fighting, contrary to popular belief. As a general rule, he appears to be in his normal condition, though when the dead snake is taken away from him, he growls fiercely and erects his hair, especially that of his tail, which resembles nothing so much as a bottle-brush. On occasions when he is playing, I have seen him go straight up to a Cobra, which was sitting erect with expanded hood, and sniff carefully right up his waistcoat, his throat, and under his chin, finally licking the snake's forked tongue as it flickered from its mouth. Often he affects to ignore the

snake, and will wander up towards it as if unaware of its presence, turning just in time to avoid the stroke, and pretending to be unconscious of the fact that the snake has struck. It is, of course, very tiring for the Cobra to remain in an upright position, and the mongoose seems to be well aware of this, for as soon as the Cobra thinks that the coast is clear, and begins to move about, the mongoose immediately tackles him again. The Cobra spits almost perpetually when in an erect position. When he is on for a fight, the mongoose's favourite tactics are to nibble the Cobra's tail. He takes the end of the tail, and gives a quick jerk, thus throwing the snake off its balance. The Cobra will do anything rather than lose its balance, because, once on the ground, its power of offence is gone. For that reason it is very careful to strike only up to a distance, equal to the height at which it is standing; and it may be observed that a Cobra's tail never leaves the ground when it strikes, nor does the body move when it strikes forward. I have seen only one exception to this rule, and that was a young and particularly ferocious Cobra which struck several inches beyond its normal striking distance by springing forwards. It came down on the ground with a sharp smack every time, and had considerable trouble in regaining its balance. Meanwhile, of course, it was quite at the mercy of the mongoose, who soon finished it off.

The Dhamin, on the other hand, will lunge so furiously that his tail leaves the ground at once, and midway in the strike he may be seen with both head and tail 5 or 6 inches from the ground, the only point in contact with the ground being a part half-way down the belly. He is just like a bow without the bow-string. The Dhamin has, however, nothing to fear from losing his balance. His lunge is really a form of protective mimicry, while a Cobra's lunge is his only means of offence. Moreover, the Dhamin is a non-poisonous snake, and its movements, excepting always the actual strike itself, are far more active than those of snakes of poisonous varieties.

I have no doubt that the constant nibbling of the tail by the mongoose is designed for another purpose than the mere irritation of the Cobra. As I have already said, a Cobra when striking never moves his tail, nor that part of the body which forms a curve from which he strikes. If the end of his tail is greatly numbed by frequent bites, it stands to reason that the whole of his balance is disarranged. The favourite position of offence is a single S curve on the ground with the point of the tail straight out behind. From being constantly worried, however, they wind the tail inside a circular coil, and thereby presumably lose a good deal of steadying power. Moreover, one can see the last 6 or 8 inches of the tail becoming limp and useless, while the

Cobra's power to strike is proportionately weakened. When the mongoose appears to be taking liberties with the Cobra, he undoubtedly knows by instinct a great deal of which we have no conception. He knows, for instance, that if the Cobra strikes at a certain angle away from his coil, he will lose his balance, and that he is therefore perfectly safe in going as close as he likes from that quarter. Similarly the Cobra does not strike without first of all pulling himself slightly back, just as one's hand involuntarily goes back when one attempts a quick motion with it—such as catching a fly.

This movement of the Cobra, slight and almost invisible though it is, gives ample warning to the mongoose, which is the quickest four-legged animal on earth, and is out of range long before the lunge takes place. Again, when the mongoose is close by the Cobra, the Cobra cannot strike short; and I have seen it striking over the mongoose's back, its body coming down with a thud against the body of the mongoose. In fact, the Cobra is always at a disadvantage; but there is this to be said for him, that, unlike the Karait, he shows fight, and looks very fierce and impressive while he is doing so.

When the mongoose really means business, he goes for the head, and bites through the brain. Some authorities—Kipling, I think, among them—states that he bites the back of the neck. The reader has only

to examine the Cobra with its hood spread to find that this is practically impossible. The Cobra's hood comes out very suddenly at right angles to the head, viewed from in front, and practically at the end of the jaw. The hood consists of a piece of hard membrane, the edges of which are serrated; and, apart from the fact that the mongoose might make a mistake as to which was neck and which was membrane, it is doubtful whether his mouth is big enough to let him reach the neck at all. The serrated edges of the hood would lacerate the corners of his lips, and the membrane is strong enough to prevent him from crushing it inwards. The neck is obviously the snake's most vulnerable point, and I take it that the hood of the Cobra is designed specially to protect the neck.

Most snakes which I have seen — poisonous and non-poisonous, including even the harmless grass snake—make a show of expanding their necks when attacked; but whether this is done in imitation of the Cobra, or whether it is with a view to make their necks more difficult to locate, I am unable to say. The fact remains, that I have never yet seen my mongoose, or any other mongoose, take a Cobra by the neck, or attempt to do so. My mongoose always bites the head generally from the side, and from behind if he can, biting through the throat and the brain simultaneously. If he attacks from

in front he will yet turn his neck so as to bite sideways; and I have seen him bite through the brain alone, the snake's lower jaw hanging useless. It is marvellous how long the snake's muscles continue to work after his brain has been destroyed. I have seen the mongoose chew a Cobra's head till nothing was left of it but a bleeding knob, yet half an hour later the snake was capable of raising this knob some 6 inches from the ground, and fully expanding the hood behind it.

Nuts used to remonstrate with me for allowing the mongoose to chew the head of a poisonous snake. They thought that if he chewed the poison he would become mad—but this belief ranks with the old yarns which relate that a snake's venom is innocuous to a mongoose, or that a mongoose knows some herb with healing properties. The fact is, of course, that a mongoose is too quick ever to get bitten, while the latter story probably arises from the fact that he is a clean little beast, and after a bloody encounter will generally proceed to a tuft of grass or herbage to clean himself up.

In the wild state mongooses are always seen in pairs, and I have no doubt that they generally attack snakes in pairs. People who have seen them tackle snakes in the open tell me that there have always been two mongooses. This must give a huge advantage to the mongooses, as the snake's attention is always diverted

from the one to the other. When tackling in a cage, the mongoose often seizes the snake's tail, and runs very fast round the cage. The circular movement, however, impedes him, as he cannot get the snake at full stretch, and the snake's body gets into the middle of the cage and moves very little. I should like to know what happens in the open, and whether the mongoose runs away at full speed until the snake behind him is dazed.

In conclusion, I will endeavour to give a brief sketch of a fight with a Cobra. The mongoose is in the cage, on a hard cement floor. A Cobra is dropped in from the top, and immediately he perceives the mongoose he erects about ten inches of his body, expands his hood, and spits menacingly. The mongoose, well back on his quarters, his nose pointing up in the air, approaches from in front of necessity, because the Cobra turns his body always to meet him. The mongoose edges nearer and nearer, and at last appears to be within range. The Cobra strikes more quickly than the eye can see, but with a light spring the mongoose is back nicely out of range, and the Cobra swings straight up to his original position. Two or three other similar frontal attacks follow, and then the mongoose turns his attention to the Cobra's tail, his last spring having been sideways, so as to land him near by.

He sniffs the end of the tail, and then noses along it, at right angles to the snake. Meanwhile the Cobra has turned his head completely round to watch. If the mongoose bites and engages his fangs, he will not be able to spring away, and the Cobra will get him. But the mongoose does not bite. He goes on nosing, and to all appearances he is not even looking at the Cobra's head. He is simply selecting, very carefully selecting, a really nice place to bite. It is too much for the Cobra, who suddenly slashes backwards, and by reason of going backwards, loses his balance. This is his undoing. The mongoose was just out of the way, and before the Cobra can recover himself, the mongoose seizes him about four inches above the tail, gives a rapid worry, and throws him on one side. This again is repeated, and the snake is beginning to tire. He is not so anxious to strike, and appears to be reserving his strength. The mongoose tries him once or twice from in front, and notices that he is no longer striking. Suddenly, before the Cobra can strike down, the mongoose springs up and catches the Cobra's head. The first time the hold is not a good one, and the mongoose jumps for safety. The next time he approaches the Cobra strikes at once, and perhaps again. The mongoose awaits his chance, and then again springs up from below. This time he has got well hold and a tremendous struggle ensues. You can hear

the cracking of the skull bones; but the Cobra is a muscular beast, with a lot of life in him yet, and his long body gives him a good purchase, so that he can swing the mongoose about. He rolls and writhes, and tries to tear the mongoose away with his coils, but he does not know that method of fighting, and the mongoose hangs on like grim death, always well out of the way of trouble.

At last the snake's efforts relax, and the mongoose lets go and springs aside. The Cobra makes a final feeble effort to raise himself, but the mongoose springs at him carelessly, and again drives his fangs through the throat and brain. The Cobra collapses helplessly on the ground, and the mongoose runs round the cage licking his lips and growling. The taste of blood seems to have made him fierce. Again he springs on the dying snake, and after a short time begins to chew the head, and reduces it to a pulp. This is the end—except that the mongoose gives a vicious display of temper when the snake is taken from him, and refuses to let go till he is literally torn off.

The mongoose is frequently kept as a pet, though it never gets really friendly. Its disposition is that of a cat. It is generally around at meal-times, and then comes a stage when no amount of beating will keep it off the table, or even off your plate. At other times it disappears, and its movements are shrouded in mystery. Then

comes the day when a mate appears with it. For a few days they go round the house together, and then both disappear into the compound for good. A saucer of milk will sometimes tempt them back for brief moments, but the period of domesticity is over.

They are dirty feeders, and enjoy carrion. Their personal habits, however, are clean, and mine takes a daily bath in a tin of water, and splashes about in it till the water is all spilled. He is given milk to drink, and large quantities of raw meat; but his particular delight is raw fish, and he thinks nothing of a dozen or more of these, rather larger

than big sardines. His strength is remarkable. One holds him as though he were a ferret, with the thumb and second finger behind his forelegs; but he is so muscular, that frequently one cannot hold him at all. He tightens his muscle, and though you are gripping hard, he will suddenly slacken off and shoot out of your hand backwards. It is this which enables him to clear himself from the coils of the Dhamin.

He is a fine little beast, unequalled for rapidity of movement, and courageous to a degree, but thoroughly independent.

BIHARI.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

WITH THE FRONTIER CAVALRY.

A LONG, low, khaki-coloured barn, much cracked as to its mud plaster, and shimmering with the doubly-distilled fierce heat of Central Asia, served them for a Mess-house. They numbered about a dozen white officers, as many Indian sirdars, and six hundred and twenty-five sabres, rank and file. At least the Adjutant always said six hundred and twenty-five, but his Punjabi Head Clerk held that he was wrong if you allowed for farriers, camel orderlies, and other odd people who perpetually complicate regimental statistics. And because the Head Clerk was a man even wiser than the Colonel himself, the Adjutant never argued the point in his hearing.

The regiment was intensely proud of itself on account of many things, which is a way regiments have, but more especially because it owned no distinctive name; while other and baser Indian Cavalry were called "Nicholson's Own," or "King William's Horse," the humbler little Frontier Corps was merely known by its number in the Army List as the "50th Cavalry." As the junior subaltern—who was afterwards killed in France—remarked: "We're nobody's nothings, thank God, and

that in itself is unique nowadays."

If, however, they were officially nameless, they did not lack Army nicknames, and for the sake of reference in this story, we will call them the *langra ulus* or the *kuchperwanis*—terms which, being interpreted, reflect both upon the soundness of their horses and the morality of their men.¹ This in reality was a gross libel originating in the Messes of certain unconsidered down-country regiments, who wore tight European uniforms, and talked English to their men.

Certainly they were not mounted on your great sleek Australian chargers, which eat like elephants and cannot climb the rocky hillsides of the Indian frontier; on the contrary, they rode wiry and fretting little country-breds, that lived and died in a perpetual lather of excitement, and were of every tint and colour known to the artist's paint-box. Roans and greys, duns and chestnuts; skewbalds, piebalds, yellow horses with great, staring, china-blue eyes; pink, strawberry-coloured steeds out of a Persian picture-book, and thin, ugly equine ghosts, which flew at you with bared teeth even when you fed them. Ugly they may have been (and few

¹ "Langra ulus" = "the lame owls." "Kuchperwanis" = (literally) "It doesn't matter"; in this case—Casual, happy-go-lucky, or devil-may-care.

Brigadiers desired their company upon a pretty ceremonial parade!), but for all that they climbed mountains like *markhor*, lived on nothing in particular, and seemed—in an emergency—to be possessed of six instead of four legs.

Of course, all this was years ago, and at the time of writing the Regiment is mounted on a more imposing and less wild breed of horse, as only befits its dignity on the right flank of the 20th Cavalry Brigade in Mesopotamia; still I think somehow that in their heart of hearts the *Langra ulus* regret the change, and their minds go back to the days when the *serre-file* rank, armed with shepherds' crooks of wood and iron, disentangled the screaming stallions from their fights and *amours* in the galloping squadrons ahead.

At the time of which we are speaking, the 50th Cavalry were stationed in Kohat, which lies at the mouth of a geographical bottle called the Miranzai Valley. The fort at Kohat, which is of Sikh origin, is the cork that shuts our end of the bottle to the Pathan marauder at the other, who might otherwise work his wicked will upon the plains and villages of British India behind that slope back gently to the Indus at Kushalgargh. For Pathan neighbours the *Kuchperwanis* had the *Adam Khēl*, the *Orakzai* and the *Zakha Khēl Afridi*—nice hairy-breasted murderers with the light-heartedness of public-school boys. The Regiment was, for the most part, composed of Sikhs, who, being Hindus, are

the hereditary enemies of the Pathans, upon whom, in former history, they waged war and triumphed over until—well—until they reached the Afridi mountains! The rest of the Regiment was composed of Mohamedans, and included many Pathans,—the latter being enlisted on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief.

It must always seem strange to an English mind that in the Indian Army it is possible to raise regiments, of which each Squadron or Company is racially different to its neighbour. Imagine a regiment at home composed of a squadron of Frenchmen, another of Englishmen, and a third of Chinese, and then you will get some faint idea of the wide gulf that separated "A" Squadron of the *Kuchperwanis*, who were of Dogra-Rajput origin, from "C" Squadron, who were Cis-Frontier Pathans. The difference is one of race, religion, and personal idiosyncrasy; but in the case of Asiatic soldiers, beyond breeding an intense squadron *esprit de corps*, it causes no real friction, and the men, who only mix with their own kith and kin in barracks, ignore their hereditary quarrels next door. In this respect an Indian Regiment is in miniature representative of the whole jarring Peninsula, which only finds common ground upon which to stand under the central British Flag. In fact the chief duty of the garrison at Kohat (which was entirely native) was to forget that Ram or Mohamed had ever existed to breed dissension in their midst, and to

run the Trans-Frontier Afridi to earth when he invaded British territory in quest of silver or cattle or women.

As the restless Afridi is mobility personified, and as regular infantry is handicapped in this respect by its heavy equipment, it usually fell to the lot of the light cavalry to make the first move in circumventing the raider. In this they were aided by a catch-em-alive-oh corps of local levies, who dwelt perpetually on mountain-tops in small detached posts, and who were officially called the "Border Military Police"; unofficially, both to Afridi and trooper alike, they were known as the *Barder*.

Hunting for needles in haystacks is proverbially a difficult amusement, but it is often mere child's play compared with looking for a hundred Pathan raiders in a wide-flung huddle of mountain and valley as big as Wales or Yorkshire, and so ever and anon the raiders triumphed over the Sirkar and returned in safety from such forays with both loot intact and their presence unchallenged.

Towards the end of one blinding "hot weather," their activities became indecently successful, and great was the wrath of the *Kuchperwanis* in consequence.

"I'll tell you what it is," said the second senior Major one night at mess, "if Simla don't have a *pukka* expedition against them soon, they'll be getting above themselves."

"Yes," said the Colonel fretfully, "if only the blanked

'Civil' would give us news of a raid as soon as they hear of it, instead of first trying to get the credit of catching them themselves with the *Barder* and police, we'd have some chance of locating them before they slipped back across the Frontier. As it is——" he waved his hand empty.

"And then," said the junior Subaltern indignantly, "if we do get on to their tracks, we're not allowed to chase over into *their* country, or we get damned for breaking the border law! Bally rot, I call it!"

"Mr Vice—the King," said the officer at the end of the mess-table.

"Gentlemen, — the King," came the orthodox reply from under the swinging punkas.

The silence that fell upon the Mess at this the first of Army toasts, was rudely broken by the clatter of a galloping horse in the Mess compound outside.

"The Brigade office orderly hath a letter," said the head *khitmutgar* impassively. "There is doubtless more trouble afoot."

The Colonel tore it open, and all eyes watched his expression with repressed gleaming interest. "Another raid on," he remarked briefly, "near Ragazai this time. Two squadrons to go out at once"—he meditated for a moment,—"A' and 'C' squadrons will rendezvous below the Cavalry Tower in half an hour's time. You'll command the whole wing, Cathcart."

The second senior Major breathed a sigh of relief, but a

muttered growl of discontent from the subalterns of "B" and "D" squadrons proclaimed their disapproval of the Colonel's choice. The officers of "A" and "C," on the other hand, rose joyously and clanked hurriedly from the Mess to their own quarters, in order to exchange the almost barbaric gorgeousness of their blue-and-gold Mess kit for the more practical khaki war-paint of parade. The deserted Colonel found himself surrounded by the half a dozen frankly mutinous subalterns who were to be left behind.

"But, sir," expostulated young Digby, "'A' and 'C' went out *last* time!"

The C.O. smiled maliciously. "Right, my boy," he replied; "and they'll always go out first so long as the horse hospital returns show that they can turn out fifteen more efficient than 'B' or 'D'!"

Cursing the sore backs and lameness of their own commands, the aggrieved subalterns ran across the dark cantonment to watch the other squadrons mount. They eyed the scene with gloomy envy, but, nevertheless, derisively prophesied another wild-geese chase for their luckier comrades, for that is only human nature.

Major Cathcart came galloping up across the parade-ground a few minutes later, and pulled up in front of the two chosen squadrons. The men were giving the last touch to their girths and feed-bags, for when

you are hot on the scent of the Afridi raider you want no girth-galls or stragglers.

"All the B.O.'s¹ present?" snapped the Major. "Right! Stand to your horses! Prepare to mount. . . . Mo'hount!"

The Pathan and Sikh and Dogra troopers swung themselves upon their impatient horses, and fiddling with their sabres and rifles, readjusted a strap here or a sling there. A hurried inspection followed, then the advance-guard trotted forward into the unknown darkness, and, finally, the main column followed in its wake.

"Good-night and good hunting!" shouted a squadron commander who was left behind. "*Khuda karē!*" (may God guard you) said the head Mess *khitmutgar*—who was a privileged old butler in the very happy regimental family—and the rear of the last squadron vanished among the flickering moonbeams.

Their way lay along the middle of a low shadowy valley, which was flanked on either side by dark frowning hills. Above them the silver spaciousness of the Asian night sky lent a fictitious sense of coolness to the parched countryside, even while the salty sweat trickled unceasingly down the horses' spur-scarred flanks. A young Sikh trooper—in the gloom a mere shadowy impression of rakish turban and flashing spurs—hummed the first six bars of old Pahl Singh's licentious love-song, until his mare,

¹ B.O.'s=British officers.

shying at a jagged shadow, turned romance into blasphemy and drove the glare of the Amritsar bazaars from his too sentimental mind. "Peace! O shameless one," he muttered reproachfully; and then, with a philosophic sigh, he settled down to the monotonous elip-clop jingle of a squadron of cavalry upon the march, with the seemingly drowsy oriental indifference that Europeans so often mistake for stupidity. The country was cultivated, and here and there the dim lights of a (friendly) Pathan village gleamed weakly through the gloom. Half of "C" squadron were enlisted from the actual district, and so there was no fear of the column losing its way.

The hot stifling night was passed in brisk trotting, only broken by the occasional halt, and dawn found them some forty miles from Kohat. Here they decided to lie up in the Toi river bed in order to water and feed before proceeding farther.

A *Barder* scallywag, who had watched their approach from his eerie up on the hillside above the river, here descended, and gave them tidings of the immediate state of affairs. A small hamlet of friendly Pathans near Ragazai had been attacked on the previous day. They had put up a stout resistance of their own, with the ancient Tower muskets with which a benign and progressive Civil Administration provided them; but the superior and magazined weapons of the raiders—which, as

Major Cathcart afterwards discovered, included looted Russian rifles, some Lee-Enfields, and, finally, a perfect little gem of a sporting Mauser—had been their undoing, and blood had flowed from the gate of their wall to the mosque within. The raiders, after mutilating the local Hindu moneylender, had absconded with both his silver and his wives. His money, life, and honour, in fact, were simultaneously raped with the grim humour of the savage countryside. The present whereabouts of the Afridis was uncertain. They had been headed off by a strong patrol of the *Barder* when they had attempted to dash for the nearest pass that led back to Tirah; shots had been exchanged, and then they had—as usual—vanished into the maze of rocks and crags that men enthusiastically call the North-West Frontier Province. That they were still in British territory—and so still a potential prey—was certain, and, roughly speaking, the *Barder* knew that they must be close to and south-east of Thall.

Now at Thall there is a strong military post—half a squadron of the *Kuchperwanis* on detachment, and a double company of Punjab Infantry; and in addition to this, the *Tori Khel* Afridi of the Kurram Valley close by is a staunch friend of the English Sirkar. For all these reasons it was impossible for the *Zakha Khel* raiders to regain their homes by such a hornet's nest of a route. Therefore it was obvi-

ous that, like a hunted animal, they would presently double back on their own tracks, and make another attempt to regain their country by some pass in the lonely Miranzai Valley, from which they had just been driven. Their immediate position, in fact, was not of their own choice, but due to the pressure put upon them by the *Barder*.

This being the case, the second senior Major of the *Kuchperwanis* had no intention of chasing will-o'-the-wisps across a glorified chaos of nothing in particular; rather he intended to block the passes in the Miranzai Valley as one stops an earth in England, and await them there, "for"—as he said to himself—"that's less fatiguing!" Even the Afridi, super-mountaineer though he be, cannot climb the glassy window-pane of slippery cliff that obtains on this part of the Frontier, more especially when he is burdened by booty; and so, upon occasion, he must use the rugged pass like the ordinary mortal of non-Highland extraction. The sweating horses were given a brief rest, and, in addition to their corn, received some commandeered *bhoosa* as forage. Then the column marched north again.

They had only gone about five miles when, to his extreme annoyance, Major Cathcart perceived the smoke of a Pathan signal fire. It blew lazily in the morning breeze from a hill-top some ten or eleven miles away. The local Pathan of the Miranzai Valley, politically considered, is a most curious

person. He lives within our boundaries; most of his brothers are in the Punjab Frontier Force; he comes in to *salaam* to the local Commissioner, and yet, with all this, he is not above helping the Trans-Frontier raider now and then, if by doing so he can score off a hated neighbour or secure some loot himself as a by-product of a *Zakha Khel* raid! In this actual instance, some gentleman with a sense of humour—for our Pathans are Asiatic Irishmen—was obviously setting in motion a system of signalling which amounted to "Ware Cavalry." This, of course, would spoil everything, and the second senior Major swore loud and deep. "You'd think the beggars *liked* being raided!" he complained bitterly. "Come *hup*, Bullrush!"—this to his restive and chafing charger. "Damn it all, but I'll sell the swine a pup yet!" He stroked his fair moustaches, and throwing his off leg over his horse's withers, slipped lightly to the ground. "Halt!" he cried, with uplifted arm. "Dis-mount!"

He formed up his command and loosened girths before summoning the British officers to his "pow-wow." "Look here," he said, "you've seen that signal fire, and you know what it means. It's no earthly good for us to go on hunting about here now, because the *Zakha Khel* know we're on their tracks and will lie *doggo* for days if necessary. We can't locate them if they do that, and if we try to, they'll prob-

ably slip through our hands altogether. What I intend to do is this: I shall leave a troop in the Gurgshaki Pass and another one at Khak Ismail, both under native officers" (here the subalterns looked anxious), "and then withdraw the rest of my force back towards Kohat. From the casual Pathan point of view, there's no difference—glancing at us from a mountain-top—between the appearance of eight troops and six troops when on the march. Their spies will see us returning and think that we're *all* going home, and so gain confidence to make another dash for the passes behind our backs, so to speak. The two troops which I intend to leave behind, and which I hope they will overlook for the reason I have just given you, may then be able to *chupau*¹ them when they come along. What do you think of the idea, Richards?"

The commander of "C" squadron sighed heavily, because he wanted to be in at the death himself. "It's quite a cunning stunt," he admitted gloomily, "and it ought to come off if we have any luck. But what about the rest of us?"

"Sorry," replied the Major briefly, "but this will have to be an N.O.'s² show. We'll give old Ressaldar Gurditt Singh and Jemadar Faquir Mahmud a chance this time, because one troop out on its own isn't a B.O.'s command."

The two native officers concerned were summoned in order that they might receive their orders. Gurditt Singh was a middle-aged sedate Sikh from the Punjab; while Faquir Mahmud was a young and reckless-looking *Durani* Afghan, and a cadet of the royal house of Kabul.

The two squadrons, each "less one troop," rode slowly back along the deserted valley towards Kohat. Jemadar Faquir Mahmud watched them until only a handful of dust remained upon the purple horizon to mark their progress, then he rode swiftly to the Gurgshaki *kotal*³ and dismounted his men; the horses he led into a deep *mullah* close by, where for the present he intended to keep them under cover.

This accomplished, he gave the somewhat startling order to his men to discard their khaki uniforms and to assemble in the dubious *déshabille* of their many-coloured shirts, with legs all innocent of boots, spurs, or puttees. This he did for two reasons: firstly, because in a rough-and-tumble with the slippery Afridi among his own native rocks, a regular trooper is heavily handicapped by his English-cut boots and breeches; secondly, because a soldier in mufti may be mistaken for a civilian, and correspondingly overlooked or ignored. The *Kuchperwanis* held an implicit though probably unjust be-

¹ Ambush.² Native officer.³ Pass.

lief that the *Barder* had a philosophic habit of running with the Afridi hare and hunting with the Government hounds; and if this was indeed the case, Jemadar Faquir Mahmud argued that the raiding party, which would undoubtedly be shy of the Government khaki, might not fear the presence of men in semi-mufti half so much, because they would probably mistake them (if they got news of their presence at all) for the local irregulars, whom they would attempt to "square." In fact, he wished to put the enemy off their guard, and the Major's initial stratagem of pretending to withdraw the whole of his force assisted him in his plan.

The morning wore on in the dry, crisp, sunny silence that hangs eternally over the brown, barren, blazing mountains of the Indian Frontier, and about noon the Jemadar got news of the raiders' approach. The Major's scheme had apparently succeeded, for the enemy were obviously making a dash for the pass—in the cavalry's "absence." They moved rapidly, with the long silent stride of the Highlander; but swift though their progress was, it was hedged around with infinite precaution. Their front and flanks were protected by the oldest and most cunning of their scouts, and half a dozen men marched in rear of the whole party.

The Afghan Jemadar watched them through his field-glasses with smiling approval, for Fate

seemed to have delivered them into his hand. They numbered some sixty men; and with the main body, and upon donkeys, were the three Hindu women they had abducted, together with the rest of the loot—silver and jewels and rich wearing apparel. They approached the pass boldly, little dreaming that thirty-two Lee-Enfield rifles covered them from behind the boulders at the foot of the gorge.

Meanwhile the *Kuchperwanis* lay silent and breathless: not a muscle moved, not a finger stirred. The unavoidable clatter of the enemy's sandals upon the loose stones was the only sound in the whole empty valley, until—"Fixed sights, rapid fire!"—and then the spell was broken! The crash of the swift discharge of musketry roared echoingly across the empty silence of the craggy countryside, and the Afridis were down behind their own rocks before the echo had died away.

Again the Jemadar gave a whispered command to his *Kot-Dafadar*, and six picked shots crept stealthily round the enemy's left flank in order to enfilade them. The position that these sharpshooters secured ten minutes later was such that the *nullah* in which the Afridis lay became untenable, and they had to abandon their cover and retire hurriedly, all exposed to the Jemadar's tormenting fire as they did so. Many fell as they retreated across the open, and the rest fled back in disorder to the cover of a small ruined mosque, five hundred yards away. The

Kuchperwanis followed them up with savage glee, and continued to shoot until the last of them had gained this temporary sanctuary; then they formed a cordon around their penned-in foe and awaited developments.

Faquir Mahmud took council with his native N.C.O.'s; to attack a bullet-proof building that only possesses one narrow entrance is never a healthy proceeding, and in this case, at least forty of the raiders had gained admission to the mosque. On the other hand, the Jemadar dreaded that if he waited until reinforcements arrived from Major Cathcart (to whom he had already despatched a galloper with a verbal message) the raiders inside might regain their nerve, and, upon discovering how small the force against them really was, break out of the mosque again and escape and scatter in all directions. It was his quick-witted Pathan trumpeter, Ali Mohamed, who really found the solution to the problem.

"*Huzoor*," he said, "see: there is a dried *bhoosa* stack behind the mosque. A man crawling up to it might go unobserved and light it, then the *Zakha Khel* would roast even before Satan burns them!"

"*Shabash!* Ali Mohamed," replied the Jemadar; "there is wisdom in thy boy's head after all, despite that folly in Peshawar, and for thee shall be reserved the honour of firing the stack. Go now, and we will distract their attention by firing at the door. See to it that thou lightest it fully and well." To his *Kot-Dafadar* he said:

"For us is reserved much honour if we can but destroy these women thieves without the help of the Major Sahib or Gurditt Singh's Sikhs, and I think that we now hold them in our hand."

"There is hope of it," the Pathan N.C.O. replied, a little doubtfully; "but I fear that when they smell the flame they will undoubtedly flee into the open, and perchance many will escape in the turmoil from the meshes of our net that is now spread for them."

"Nay, rather we have hooked our fish, brother, and it only remains for us to land him! The fire will compel them to fly away from it, and so they cannot scatter in all directions, but must needs choose *one*—the coolest! This being so, and the fear of the fire in their evil hearts as well, they will assuredly be crowded together like sheep leaping through a gap; indeed, they are even already our carrion—look!"

A jagged tongue of yellow flame wriggled delicately up the *bhoosa* as he spoke, and a second later the wind had caught it and swirled it around the very base of the stack. Young Ali Mohamed had done his work full well, and the scorching blast swept onwards down wind towards the doomed mosque.

The immediate effect upon the garrison within was not at first apparent, save that their shooting showed a sensible slackening; then suddenly there came the deluge, and twenty or thirty maddened figures poured out of the blazing

death-trap like bees from out an overturned hive. Like bees, too, they stung the *Kuchperwanis*, but their stings were of lead and nickel. "Strike! O my Pathans, and kill!" shouted the Jemadar in his own *argot*, forgetting in his excitement all about orthodox English words of command. "Destroy the *Zakha Khel*, O men of *Usufzai*! for now is your chance!"

Bid a Macleod kill a Mackenzie! The men of "C" squadron poured rapid fire into their foe, varying the hammer-and-tongs stand-up fight with the shouting of much filthy abuse and some occasional stone-throwing! Perhaps a dozen of the enemy managed to dive through the cordon and effected their escape into the hills beyond; but the remainder, scorched, wounded, and dead alike, were caught in a storm centre where there was no cover, and which was raked again and again by the cross-fire of the triumphant *Kuchperwanis*. No question of surrender entered the enemy's head; to be captured alive meant a civil trial (and the gallows) for robbery under arms; besides, on the Indian Frontier we do not trust each other sufficiently to surrender our swords so long as we have life to use them.

At last every Afridi was upon the ground—dead, wounded, or burned—and for a minute the fire on both sides ceased.

"Would ye surrender?" shouted Jemadar Faquir Mahmud—as a matter of form, and not because he expected that his own race would do so.

"Son of a burned pig," came

the courteous reply, "I know thy face, and I have sons! They will avenge my death! Now kill!"

The *Kuchperwanis* obliged him at once, because a group of wounded Afridis is about as dangerous as a basketful of trampled cobras, and it is a matter of their lives or your own.

About an hour later Major Cathcart came galloping back with his raging subalterns, who could have torn the Jemadar limb from limb for "keeping all the fun to himself." "Damn it, Jemadar Sahib," they expostulated quite seriously, "it's not playing the game at all."

Faquir Mahmud smiled his satisfaction of his own day's work, and handed the Major his butcher's bill. "We have killed thirty-three raiders," he said briefly, "and recovered their loot. Shall I now make arrangements to send their bodies in to the Colonel Sahib to count? Also the three Hindu women who are uninjured?"

"I don't expect *Mrs* Colonel Sahib would appreciate *that*," said the senior Major with twinkling eyes. "I should try the Deputy-Commissioner, if I were you—he's a bachelor!"

"Also," added the Jemadar, as an afterthought, "I shot two woodcock on the way with my shot-gun. These also will I send to the Commissioner Sahib."

There was much triumphant rejoicing in the Cavalry Mess at Kohat on the following

night. The infantry came in to swell the occasion, and reminded the over-jubilant cavalymen that as in reality they were only "medieval ironmongers," they needn't put on airs just because they had "outed" an Afridi raiding party. The blue-and-gold attired young gentlemen of the *Kuchperwanis* poured whisky-and-sodas down the necks of their too critical guests in the billiard-room, and started to sing: "Oh, mother, dearest mother, there's a wake in Kildare"; they were mostly Irishmen, and so you must excuse the words of the song, which the present writer cannot set down.

Jemadar Faquir Mahmud was present as a Mess guest, for as a scion of the Afghan royal family, and as a student of both French and English, he was a much-privileged officer; and he drank frankly and fully of the bubbly frothing liquid which, as a good Mahomedan, he called sherbet.

It was about 2 A.M. before the *Kuchperwanis* subalterns got rid of their guests, and then an Afridi sepoy of the 558th Punjab Infantry started to make the night joyously hideous with a bagpipe selection of *Zakhme Dil*; this being interpreted means the "Wounded Heart," and refers to the possibly romantic but frankly unfortunate love affairs of a certain poetic but altogether impossible Afghan Amir long since dead and buried. The words of this—or rather the British subalterns' parodied version of it—are even more

unrepeatable than those of the "Wake in Kildare."

Next morning outside the *Kuchperwanis*' Quarter-Guard, and under the immediate fire of their rifles, were buried the dead Afridis who had perished in the affray. This, however, was only a temporary measure, as it was certain that ambassadors would be sent in from Tirah to claim their bodies for burial in their own country, on the payment of a fine which would be levied in rifles. Accordingly the Colonel was not surprised when a few days later his office orderly, who was a well-bred and supercilious-looking Mahomedan from the horse-breeding districts of the Punjab, informed him that certain Semitic-faced visitors awaited his pleasure outside.

Their spokesman was a tall dignified man of middle age, with a facile tongue and a ready smile; and the conversation that followed was entirely reminiscent of an Irishman selling a horse at Clonmel.

"O Huzoor," said the Afridi ambassador, in his deep guttural *Pushto*, which is so different to the finicky tongue of Hindustan, "see: we will give you one of our rifles for the bodies of ten of our friends. That is to say, we will give you three rifles for the thirty-three."

"Nay, rather thou shouldst give us ten rifles for each body," replied the Colonel laughing; "but this is no matter for me but for the Commissioner Sahib to settle."

They adjourned forthwith to the picturesque Residency that was once inhabited by Cavagnari himself, and argued the rest of the morning away, until a settlement mutually satisfactory to all concerned was finally arrived at.

Then the ambassadors prepared to take their departure with their gruesome burdens. "But rest assured," said their spokesman naïvely, as he turned to leave, "there has been a great deceit in this matter, for had we known that it was the cavalry we should have lain hidden, and so escaped thee. Nor is it right or just that thy soldiers should attack us who were but bent on plunder: that is an affair for your police and the *Barder*; let the soldiers fight only when we proclaim the Holy War! Much trouble will come of all this impropriety, and thirty new blood-feuds must now arise and be fed, until all is made straight again. Farewell!"

"That's a cheery look-out for Faquir Mahmud," said the Adjutant thoughtfully.

"Well, as he's got at least five hereditary blood-feuds as family heirlooms already, I don't expect that a sixth—and a personal one at that—will worry him very much," answered the Colonel, laughing, as he broke into song:

"It's war, red war I'll give you then,
War till my sinews fail;
For the wrong you have done to a
chief of men
And a thief of the Zukha Khey!"¹

It may interest the reader to learn that the relations of the slain Afridi raiders have not as yet settled their account with Jemadar Faquir Mahmud. On the contrary, few of them remain among the Quick, because a month after the affray they tried their luck again against another squadron of Indian Cavalry near Peshawar. Here they were chased across a valley at the lance point, and they finally put up a most sporting effort with their magazine rifles until all had obtained a free first-class ticket direct to the Prophet's Paradise, as befits brave men who place their God before their safety.

ZERES.

¹ "The Border Thief."

AN AIRMAN'S OUTINGS.—IV.

A CLOUD RECONNAISSANCE.

CLOUDS, say the text-books of meteorology, are collections of partly condensed water vapour, or of fine ice crystals. Clouds, mentioned in terms of the newspaper and the club, are dingy masses of nebulousness under which the dubious politician, company promoter, or other merchant of hot air is hidden from open attack and exposure. Clouds, to the flying officer on active service, are either useful friends or unstrafeable enemies. The hostile clouds are very high and of the ice-crystal variety. They form a light background, against which aeroplanes are boldly silhouetted, to the great advantage of the anti-aircraft gunners. The friendly or water-vapour clouds are to be found several thousands of feet lower. If a pilot be above them they help him to dodge writs for trespass, which Archibald the bailiff seeks to hand him. When numerous enough to make attempts at observation ineffective, they perform an even greater service for him—that of arranging for a day's holiday. And at times the R.F.C. pilot, like the man with a murky past, is constrained to have clouds for a covering against attack, as you shall see if you will accompany me on the trip about to be described.

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The period is the latter half

of September 1916, a time of great doings on the Somme front. After a few weeks of comparative inaction—if methodical consolidation and intense artillery preparation can be called inaction—the British are once more denting the Boche line. Flers, Martinpuich, Courcolette, and Eaucourt l'Abbaye have fallen within the past week, and the tanks have just made their first ungainly bow before the curtain of war, with the superlatives of the war correspondent in close attendance. Leave from France has been cancelled indefinitely.

Our orders are to carry through all the reconnaissance work allotted to us, even though weather conditions place such duties near the border-line of possible accomplishment. That is why we now propose to leave the aerodrome, despite a great lake of cloud that only allows the sky to be seen through rare gaps, and a sixty-mile wind that will fight us on the outward journey. Under these circumstances we shall probably find no friendly craft east of the trenches, and, as a consequence, whatever Hun machines are in the air will be free to deal with our party. However, since six machines are detailed for the job, I console myself with the old tag about safety in numbers.

We rise to a height of 3000

feet, and rendezvous there. From the flight commander's bus I look backward to see how the formation is shaping, and discover that we now number five, one machine having failed to start by reason of a dud engine. We circle the aerodrome, waiting for a sixth bus, but nobody is sent to join us. The "Carry on" signal shows up from the ground, and we head eastward. After climbing another fifteen hundred feet, we enter the clouds. It is now impossible to see more than a yard or two through the intangible wisps of grey-white vapour that seem to float around us, so that our formation loses its symmetry, and we become scattered.

Arrived in the clear atmosphere above the clouds my pilot throttles down until the rear machines have appeared and re-formed. We then continue in the direction of the trenches, with deep blue infinity above and the unwieldy cloud-banks below. Familiar landmarks show up from time to time through holes in the white screen.

Against the violent wind, far stronger than we found it near the ground, we make laboured progress. Two of the party are evidently in difficulties, for they drop further and further behind. Soon one gives in and turns back, the pilot being unable to maintain pressure for his petrol supply. I shout the news through the speaking-tube, and hear, in reply from the flight commander, a muffled comment, which might be "Well!" but is more likely to

be something else. Three minutes later the second bus in trouble turns tail. Its engine has been missing on one cylinder since the start, and is not in a fit state for a trip over enemy country. Again I call to the leader, and again hear a word ending in "ell." The two remaining machines close towards the leader, and we continue. Very suddenly one of them drops out, with a rocker arm gone. Its nose goes slowly down, and it glides into the clouds. Yet again I call the flight commander's attention to our dwindling numbers, and this time I cannot mistake the single-syllabled reply. It is a full-throated "Hell!" For my part I compare the party to the ten little nigger boys, and wonder when the only survivor, apart from our own machine, will leave. I look at it anxiously. The wings on one side are much lighter than those on the other, and I therefore recognise it as the Tripehound's bus. There is ground for misgiving, as on several occasions it has seemed to fly in an erratic manner. The cause of this, as we find out on our return, is that for five minutes the Tripehound has been leaning over the side, with the joystick held between his knees while attempting to fasten a small door in the cowling round the engine, left open by a careless mechanic. It is important to shut the opening, as otherwise the wind may rush inside and tear off the cowling. Just as a short band of the trench-line south of Arras can be seen

through a gap, the Tripehound, having found that he cannot possibly reach far enough to close the protruding door, signals that he must go home.

I do not feel altogether sorry to see our last companion leave, as we have often been told not to cross the lines on a reconnaissance flight with less than three machines; and with the wind and the low clouds, which now form an opaque window, perforated here and there by small holes, a long observation journey over Boocheland by a single aeroplane does not seem worth while. But the flight commander, remembering the recent order about completing a reconnaissance at all costs, thinks differently and decides to go on. To get our bearings he holds down the nose of the machine until we have descended beneath the clouds, in full view of the open country.

We find ourselves a mile or two beyond Arras. As soon as the bus appears it is bracketed in front, behind, and on both sides by black shell-bursts. We swerve aside, but more shells quickly follow. The shooting is particularly good, for the Archie people have the exact range of the low clouds slightly above us. Three times we hear the hiss of passing chunks of high explosive, and the lower left plane is unevenly punctured by a flying fragment. We lose height for a second to gather speed, and then, to my relief, the pilot zhums up to a cloud. Although the gunners can no longer see their target, they loose off a

few more rounds and trust to luck that a stray shell may find us. These bursts are mostly far wide of the mark, although two of them make ugly black blotches against the whiteness of the vapour through which we are rising.

Once more we emerge into the open space between sky and cloud. The flight commander takes the mouthpiece of his telephone tube and shouts to me that he intends completing the round above the clouds. To let me search for railway and other traffic he will descend into view of the ground at the most important points. He now sets a compass course for Toutprès, the first large town of the reconnaissance, while I search all around for possible enemies. At present the sky is clear, but at any minute Boche police craft may appear from the unbroken blue or rise from the cloud.

The slowness of our ground speed, due to the fierce wind, allows me plenty of time to admire the strangely beautiful surroundings. Above is the inverted bowl of blue, bright for the most part, but duller towards the horizon-rim. The sun pours down a vivid light, that spreads quicksilver iridescence over the cloud-tops. Below is the cloudscape, fantastic and far-stretching. The shadow of our machine is surrounded by a halo of sunshine as it darts along the irregular white surface. The clouds dip, climb, twist, and flatten into every conceivable shape. Thrown together as they never could be on solid

earth are outlines of the wildest and tamest features of a world unspoiled by battlefields, brick towns, ruins, or any other ulcers on the face of nature. Jagged mountains, forests, dainty hills, waterfalls, heavy seas, plateaux, precipices, quiet lakes, jungles, rolling plains, caverns, chasms, and dead deserts merge into one another, all in a uniform white, as though wrapped in cotton wool and laid out for inspection in haphazard continuity. And yet, for all its mad irregularity, the cloud-scape from above is perfectly harmonious and never tiring. One wants to land on the clean surface and explore the wonderful continent. Sometimes, when passing a high projection, the impulse comes to lean over and grab a handful of the fleecy covering.

After being shut off from the ground for a quarter of an hour, we are able to look down through a large chasm. Two parallel canals cut across it, and these we take to be part of the canal junction below Toutprès. This agrees with our estimate of speed, wind, and time, according to which we should be near the town. The pilot takes the machine through the clouds, and we descend a few hundred feet below them.

To disconcert Archie we travel in zigzags, while I search for items of interest. A train is moving south, and another is entering Toutprès from the east. A few barges are dotted among the various canals. Bordering a wood to

the west is an aerodrome. About a dozen aeroplanes are in line on the ground, but the air above it is empty of Boche craft. Evidently the Huns below had not expected a visit from hostile machines on such a day, for Archie allows several minutes to pass before introducing himself. A black puff then appears on our level some distance ahead. We sidestep, but the gunners find our new position and send bursts all round the bus. The single *wouff* of the first shot has become a jerky chorus that swells or dwindles according to the number of shells and their nearness.

I signal to the flight commander that I have finished with Toutprès, whereupon we climb into the clouds and comparative safety. We rise above the white intangibility and steer north-east, in the direction of Passementerie. I continue to look for possible aggressors. The necessity for a careful look-out is shown when a group of black specks appears away to the south, some fifteen hundred feet above us. In this area and under today's weather conditions, the odds are a hundred to one that they will prove to be Boches. We lose height until our bus is on the fringe of the clouds and ready to escape out of sight. Apparently the newcomers do not spot us in the first place, for they are flying transverse to our line of flight. A few minutes later they make the discovery, change direction, and begin a steep glide toward us. All this while I have kept

my field-glasses trained on them, and as one machine turns I can see the Maltese crosses painted on the wings. The question of the strangers' nationality being answered, we slip into the clouds to avoid attack.

The pilot thinks it advisable to remain hidden by keeping inside the clouds. He must therefore steer entirely by compass, without sun or landmark to guide him. As we leave the clear air a left movement of the rudder, without corresponding bank, swings the machine to the north, so that its nose points away from the desired course. The pilot puts on a fraction of right rudder to counteract the deviation. We veer eastward, but rather too much, if the swaying needle of the compass is to be believed. A little left rudder again puts the needle into an anti-clockwise motion. With his attention concentrated on our direction, the pilot, impatient at waiting for the needle to become steady, unconsciously kicks the rudder-controls, first to one side, then to the other. The needle begins to swing around, and the compass is thus rendered useless for the time being. For the next minute or two, until it is safe to leave the clouds, the pilot must now keep the machine straight by instinct, and trust to his sense of direction.

A similar mishap often happens when flying through cloud. Pilots have been known to declare that all compasses are liable to swing of their

own accord when in clouds, though the real explanation is that they themselves have disturbed the needle unduly by a continuous pressure on each side of the rudder bar in turn, thus causing an oscillation of the rudder and a consequent zigzagged line of flight. The trouble is more serious than it would seem to the layman, as when the compass is out of action, and no other guides are available, one tends to drift round in a large circle, like a man lost in the jungle. Should the craft be driven by a rotary engine, the torque, or outward wash from the propeller, may make a machine edge more and more to the left, unless the pilot is careful to allow for this tendency.

Such a drift to the left has taken us well to the north of a straight line between Toutprès and Passementerie, as we discover on leaving the clouds for a second or two, so as to correct the error with the aid of landmarks. But the compass has again settled down to good behaviour, and we are able to get a true course before we climb back to the sheltering whiteness.

A flight inside the clouds is far from pleasant. We are hemmed in by a drifting formlessness that looks like thin steam, but, unlike steam, imparts a sensation of coldness and clamminess. The eye cannot penetrate farther than about a yard beyond the wing tips. Nothing is to be seen but the aeroplane, nothing is to be heard but the droning

hum of the engine, which seems louder than ever amid the isolation. I am bored, cold, and uncomfortable. The time drags along lamely; five minutes masquerade as half an hour, and only by repeated glances at the watch do I convince myself that we cannot yet have reached the next objective. I study the map for no particular reason except that it is something to do. Then I decide that the Lewis gun ought to be fired as a test whether the working parts are still in good order. I hold the spade-grip, swing round the circular mounting until the gun points to the side, and loose five rounds into the unpleasant vapour. The flight commander is startled at the sudden clatter, and turns round. Finding that the fire was mine and not an enemy's, he shakes his fist as a protest against the sudden disturbance. Even this action is welcome as being evidence of companionship.

When the pilot, judging that *Passementerie* should be below, takes the machine under the clouds, I feel an immense relief, even though the exit is certain to make us a target for Archie. We emerge slightly to west of the town. There is little to be observed; the railways are bare of trains, and the station contains only an average number of trucks. Four black-crossed aeroplanes are flying over their aerodrome at a height of some two thousand feet. Three of them begin to climb, perhaps in an attempt to intercept us. However, our bus has plenty of time to disappear, and this we

do quickly—so quickly that the A.A. batteries have only worried us to the extent of half a dozen shells, all wide of the mark.

We rise right through the white screen into full view of the sun. Apparently the sky is clear of intruders, so we turn for three-quarters of a circle and head for *Plusprès*, the third point of call. The wind now being behind the machine in a transverse direction, our speed in relation to the ground is nearly twice the speed of the outward half of the journey. The sun is pleasantly warming, and I look towards it gratefully. A few small marks, which may or may not be sun-spots, flicker across its face. To get an easier view I cover my eyes with goggles, the smoke-tinted glasses of which allow me to look at the glare without blinking. In a few seconds I am able to recognise the spots as distant aeroplanes moving in our direction. Probably they are the formation that we encountered on the way to *Passementerie*. Their object in keeping between us and the sun is to remain unobserved with the help of the blinding stream of light, which throws a haze around them. I call the pilot's attention to the scouts, and yet again we fade into the clouds. This time, with the sixty-mile wind as our friend, there is no need to remain hidden for long. Quite soon we shall have to descend to look at *Plusprès*, the most dangerous point on the round.

When we take another look at the earth I find that the pilot has been exact in timing our arrival at the important Boche base—too exact, indeed, for we find ourselves directly over the centre of the town. Only somebody who has been Archie'd from Plusprès can realise what it means to fly right over the stronghold at four thousand feet. The advanced lines of communication that stretch westward to the Arras-Péronne front all hinge on Plusprès, and for this reason it often shows activity of interest to the aeroplane observer and his masters. The Boches are therefore highly annoyed when British aircraft arrive on a tour of inspection. To voice their indignation they have concentrated many anti-aircraft guns around the town. What is worse, the Archie fire at Plusprès is more accurate than at any other point away from the actual front, as witness the close bracket formed by the sighting shots that greet our solitary bus.

From a hasty glance at the station and railway lines, while we slip away to another level, I gather that many trains and much rolling stock are to be bagged. The work will have to be done under serious difficulties, in the shape of beastly black bursts and the repeated changes of direction necessary to dodge them. We bank sharply, side-slip, lose height, regain it, and perform other erratic evolutions likely to spoil the gunners' aim; but the area is so closely sprinkled by shells that, to whatever point the ma-

chine swerves, we always hear the menacing report of bursting H.E. It is no easy matter to observe accurately while in my present condition of "wind up," created by the coughing of Archie. I lean over to count the stationary trucks in the sidings. "*Wouff, wouff, wouff*," interrupts Archie from a spot deafeningly near; and I withdraw into "the office," otherwise the observer's cockpit. Follows a short lull, during which I make another attempt to count the abnormal amount of rolling stock. "*Wouff—Hs—sss!*" shrieks another shell, as it throws a large H.E. splinter past our tail. Again I put my head in the office. I write down an approximate estimate of the number of trucks, and no longer attempt to sort them out, so many to a potential train. A hunt over the railway system reveals no fewer than twelve trains. These I pencil-point on my map, as far as I am able to locate them. A massed collection of vehicles remain stationary in what must be either a large square or the marketplace. I attempt to count them, but am stopped by a report louder than any of the preceding ones. Next instant I find myself pressed tightly against the seat. The whole of the machine is lifted about a hundred feet by the compression from a shell that has exploded a few yards beneath our under-carriage. I begin to wonder whether all our troubles have been swept away by a direct hit; but an examination of the machine shows

no damage beyond a couple of rents in the fabric of the fuselage. That finishes my observation work for the moment. Not with a court-martial as the only alternative could I carry on the job until we have left Archie's inferno of frightfulness. The pilot is of the same mind, and we nose into the clouds, pursued to the last by the insistent smoke-puffs.

When the bus is once again flying between sky and cloud, we begin to feel more at home. No other craft come within range of vision, so that without interruption we reach Musette, the fourth railway junction to be spied upon. The rolling stock there is scarcely enough for two train-loads, and no active trains can be spotted. We hover above the town for a half-minute, and then leave for Boislens.

The machine now points westward and homeward and thus has the full benefit of the wind, which accelerates our ground speed to nearly a hundred and fifty miles an hour. The gods take it into their heads to be kind, for we are not obliged to descend through the clouds over Boislens, as the region can be seen plainly through a gap large enough to let me count the R.S. and note that a train, with steam up, stands in the station.

As Boislens is the last town mentioned by the H.Q. people who mapped out the reconnaissance, the job is all but completed. Yet twelve miles still separate us from the

nearest bend of the trench line, and a twelve-mile area contains plenty of room for a fight. Since the open atmosphere shows no warning of an attack, I look closely toward the sun—for a fast scout will often try to surprise a two-seater by approaching between its quarry and the sun. At first I am conscious of nothing but a strong glare; but when my goggled eyes become accustomed to the brightness, I see, or imagine I see, an indistinct oblong object surrounded by haze. I turn away for a second to avoid the oppressive light. On seeking the sun again I find the faint oblong more pronounced. For one instant it deviates from the straight line between our bus and the sun, and I then recognise it as an aeroplane. I also discover that a second machine is hovering two thousand feet above the first. The chief hobby of the flight commander is to seek a scrap. Immediately I make known to him the presence of hostile craft he tests his gun in readiness for a fight. Knowing by experience that if he starts manœuvring round a Hun he will not break away while there is the slightest chance of a victory, I humbly remind him, by means of a leaf from my notebook, that since our job is a reconnaissance, the R.F.C. law is to return quickly with our more or less valuable information, and to abstain from such luxuries as unnecessary fights. Although he does not seem too pleased at the reminder he puts

down the nose of the machine, so as to cross the lines in the shortest possible time. The first Hun scout continues the dive to within three hundred yards, at which range I fire a few short bursts, by way of an announcement to the Boche that we are ready for him and protected from the rear. He flattens out of the dive and sits behind our tail at a respectful distance, until the second scout has joined him. The two separate and prepare to swoop down one from each side. But we are now passing the trenches, and just as one of our attackers begins to dive, a formation of *de Havilands* (British "pusher" scout machines) arrives to investigate. The second Boche plants himself between us and the newcomers, while his companion continues to dive until he is a hundred and fifty yards from us. At this range I rattle through the rest of the ammunition drum and the Hun swerves aside. We then recognise the machine as an *Albatross* scout or "German spad," a highly dangerous type that entered the lists quite recently. Finding that they

now have to reckon with five *de Havilands*, the two Huns turn sharply and race eastward, their superior speed saving them from pursuit.

We pass through the clouds for the last time on the trip, and fly home very soberly over friendly territory, while I piece together my hurried notes. The squadron commander meets us in the aerodrome with congratulations and a desire for information.

"Seen anything?" he asks.

"Fourteen trains and some M.T.," I reply.

"And a few thousand clouds," adds the flight commander.

By the time I have returned from the delivery of my report at G.H.Q., the wing office has sent orders that we are to receive a mild censure for carrying out a reconnaissance with only one machine. The squadron commander grins as he delivers the reproof, so that we do not feel altogether crushed.

"Don't do it again," he concludes.

As we have not the least desire to do it again, the order is unlikely to be disobeyed.

CONTACT.

"CLAIMS."

BY A DIVISIONAL CLAIMS OFFICER.

"WHAT on earth is a Divisional Claims Officer?" one can hear many readers exclaim, and even among the latest-joined subalterns, whose universal knowledge on matters military would justify one in saying that what they don't know is not worth knowing, many would be hard put to it to give an answer to the question. You may search the pages of 'War Establishments' in vain for an answer. For, as Hamlet once remarked—

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamed of in our philosophy,"

and this war has produced many things that were not dreamed of in the philosophy of those whose duty it was to prepare for war.

The wife of one Claims Officer, whose handwriting was not as clear as that of a lawyer's clerk, in a letter to a friend, said, "My husband has been appointed Divisional Claims Officer. His duty is to look after Claims." The recipient was so puzzled by this that she decided she must have misread the words, and solved the puzzle triumphantly by substituting Drains for Claims!

So it would appear that some preliminary explanation is necessary. It will be obvious to every one that the position of an Army waging

war on the common enemy in the country of an Ally is rather a delicate one. Its men and horses and guns want accommodation, and its horses want a certain amount of fresh fodder. And although, as the French Government has done with us, the same facilities and powers of requisitioning such necessities on payment are granted to the foreign army as to their own, yet the inhabitants, however friendly, can hardly be expected to look with the same leniency on the occupation of their property by foreign troops as they do when it is occupied by their own army. Add to this the traditional belief in the depth of John Bull's pocket, and the undoubted fact that nine Englishmen out of ten would rather pay what they are asked than make a fuss, and you have the train of circumstances which leads to Claims being made.

Let us picture to ourselves what happens on the arrival of a battalion in a village where it is to be billeted. An officer will have been sent on to allot the billets in the village to the various companies. It is dark and probably raining. "A" Company Commander is told to put his men into the buildings of a large farm. He marches his company to the farm gates and halts them, goes inside with his Sergeant-Major and his Platoon Com-

manders, and makes a survey of the buildings, flashing his torch into dark and possibly not very clean barns and sheds. He hastily allots the various shelters to his Platoon Commanders, and tells them to put their platoons in. This they proceed to do. The men, tired and wet, file into the dark cavern allotted to them. Some one produces a candle, and first here, then there, a faint light makes the darkness a little more visible. The men select their pitches, and divest themselves of their equipment, while the orderlies proceed to the Field Kitchens or Cookers to draw the hot tea which has been preparing on the march. After tea the men proceed to try and make themselves comfortable for the night. Overhead some man spies something which looks like straw. Perhaps it is straw, perhaps it is unthrashed wheat or oats—it is too dark to tell the difference. Anyhow it won't hurt to take a little,—the inhabitants whose hearths and homes they are defending surely won't grudge them a little straw. So the damage begins. Next door there is a shed, half of which has been used for storing field peas. Probably the owner has explained this to the officer in command of the platoon, but he has imperfectly understood, or in his hurry to get his men settled has forgotten it, and the men stumbling into the darkness find one half of their billet covered with something which they don't recognise as ordinary farm crops (more par-

ticularly if they are men from a town-raised battalion). Who can blame them if they regard themselves as providentially guided to a soft bed? But next morning the peas are practically ruined, and no one can blame the French peasant for feeling he has a just claim against *L'Armée Britannique* for loss of some of his hard-won crops.

Or, again, picture the case of a battery of artillery put into a farm. It is not often that stables, such as we understand them, are to be found in a French farm, or if there are any, they are probably being used for the farm horses or the cattle. Therefore other farm-buildings are put under contribution for the purpose. These will be either barns or outhouses. The French barn is generally a building divided into three compartments, the partitions being low brick walls, with a stout beam laid on the bricks, which supports the beams holding the roof. Such a barn forms an admirable billet for an infantry company, as the partitions add to the comfort and warmth of the billet. The walls of these buildings are generally of brick to the height of two or three feet, with the upper parts made of "torchis," a kind of wattle and daub. These were never meant to house big, strong, healthy horses. The inevitable result is that they are soon kicked to pieces. It is difficult to blame the gunners for putting their horses under shelter until proper lines can be built, or if they are only staying in a

village a night or two. And yet the damage done is real, and, after the occupation of a village by a succession of artillery units, considerable.

Enough has been said to show how easily claims for damage may arise in the ordinary routine of daily life, without any wilfulness on the part of the British troops, but merely due to ignorance or lack of imagination.

The proper procedure on leaving a billet is for an officer of the unit to go round the property with the owner and an interpreter, and find out what complaints of damage he has to make. Where damage is admitted by the officer, it is his duty to pay for any wilful damage, and to report on any other damage to the Divisional Claims Officer. This at all events is what is laid down as the proper procedure. But it so often happens, especially in these latter days, that orders to move at very short notice, or orders to move at a very early hour, are received, either of which makes it difficult to carry out the regulation. Or again, it is often found that the mere asking if there is any damage to complain of, suggests the making of claims to inhabitants who would not otherwise have thought of it, and officers, rightly or wrongly, decide that it is better to leave well alone. In such cases the inhabitant lodges his claim with the Maire of the village, and if the claimant or the Maire knows the unit concerned, it is sent to the Divisional Claims Officer, or

else reaches him through the Claims Commission.

Having received a claim, the Claims Officer's first duty is to obtain a report on the claim from the unit concerned, and having received that, personally to investigate the damage complained of, and adjudicate thereon. He is not allowed to pay more than — francs in cash. For any larger sum he must send a report in to the Commission, who deal with it on the report. This "power of the purse" up to — francs is a great stand-by. The sight of a bundle of fresh notes all ready to be transferred to his own pockets acts as a great stimulus to a French peasant to accept a sum down.

It is very important that the Claims Officer should receive a careful report from the unit, as otherwise he has only the claimant's word to go on. It is a simple and easy way to get a cart repaired or broken windows mended, to put it down to British troops—and such things as buckets, tubs, ladders, and tools are known to have been "lost" even before the rural innocence of France and Flanders was invaded by a "brutal and licentious soldiery" from the North. But such reports are not always easy to obtain. There is a class of person who, if you suggest that he or his men have perhaps unwittingly caused some damage, at once assumes an air of injured innocence, and seems to think you regard him as a thief or housebreaker. Others again are cursed with extraordinarily

short memories, or look on the whole thing as a "d——d nuisance." They have come out here to win the war, and not to discuss "dégâts" that may have been done to the property of French peasants. Between these various types the Claims Officer has to walk warily. The writer was greeted once by an officer, who exclaimed, "Hullo, going about making yourself a nuisance, as usual." The retort that the policeman is no nuisance to the law-abiding citizen was too obvious. But, on the other hand, there are plenty of officers who take a great deal of trouble to find out the truth, and are of the greatest assistance.

The actual investigation of the claim is perhaps the pleasantest part of the Claims Officer's work. It brings him into touch with the French peasant, and a delightful class they are to have to deal with. It is extraordinary, when one considers that for two years and more they have had a succession of units billeted on them,—men speaking an unknown tongue, and understanding little that is said to them—men with strange habits, and ideas on rudimentary subjects entirely different from their own,—that they are so kindly disposed towards them still, and retain so little resentment for all the damage that has been committed. It really reflects the greatest credit on both sides. True, the British Tommy spends his money freely, but he has three qualities which especially en-

dear him to his French hosts and hostesses. One is his cheery good-humour and his readiness to help; another his honesty; and the last his love of children. There are, of course, black sheep in both folds. But, taken altogether, the occupation of a large area of France by the British Expeditionary Force has worked wonderfully smoothly, and speaks volumes for the patience and tact of the French peasant, and the inherent goodness of the English Tommy.

There are naturally many "dégâts" caused. These, in the summer and autumn, consist chiefly of damage to crops. All such wilful damage it is the duty of the Claims Officer to bring home to the guilty party, and make the man or his officer pay.

But even with the best will in the world, the Claims Officer is often unable to bring home to a unit or individual the responsibility for an act of damage. Either the claim has taken a long time to reach the Claims Officer, or he is unable to visit the scene of the damage for some time after, and meanwhile the building in question has been occupied by other units, or the report from the unit may circumstantially deny that the damage was done by them, as it already existed when they took over the billet. Under such circumstances the Claims Officer has to use his own discretion, and decide whether the damage has clearly been done by British troops, in which case the cost is added to our little War Bill. A short time

ago the writer was investigating a number of claims in one village. This village had for some months been a halting-place for a few days at a time for units of—no, I will not say to which arm of the Service they belonged. It was impossible to say, "This unit clearly did this bit of damage, that unit did that." All that one could regretfully say was that it was due to occupation by British troops, and pay up with what grace one could.

It must not be supposed that the sum claimed is always the sum paid; in fact such a thing is the exception rather than the rule. It may be of interest to enumerate the question a Claims Officer puts to himself or to the claimant, or some (more or less) impartial witness.

He first tries to reconstruct the building in his mind's eye, and asks the age of the building, and whether it was in good condition. The answer to the latter is almost invariably in the affirmative, but a glance at the woodwork (if any is left), or at the neighbouring building, will generally put him right.

Had French troops ever been in occupation? If so, had they done any damage? How many men had been billeted there? If the claimant had received a considerable amount for billeting, a certain amount may often be written off for fair wear and tear. One can see for oneself whether the people are in well-to-do circumstances, and whether they are of the honest sort or not. The Maire

will often be able to enlighten one on this point, or, better still, the schoolmaster or schoolmistress, who is generally the Maire's secretary, and knows the village folk intimately, as the parents of the children he or she has to teach.

Then, again, if the claimant is the owner of an *estaminet*, or if on entering one finds the kitchen full of *Tommies* enjoying coffee or cocoa, or possibly eggs and bread-and-butter, one realises that if the war has brought some loss in one direction to the owners, it has certainly brought much grist to their mill in another. It is the weighing up of all these points, and the glimpses they give into human nature, that make Claims work so interesting. The writer has always found that the amount of money claimed is in inverse proportion to the poverty of the claimant. The owner of a large chateau, which if we had not occupied it would have remained empty and unprofitable, but which through our occupation brought in 25 francs a day to its owner, sent in a large claim, which included the cost of twelve panes of glass and a few tiles in the kitchen during a year's occupation; and close by a poor widow, who had lost her husband in the war, and had three children to bring up, claimed a modest 50 francs for her winter crop of potatoes. Needless to say, this claim was promptly paid in full.

So it will be seen that there are many circumstances which will influence our Claims Officer

in deciding how much he ought to pay, quite apart from the actual value of the damage. And, as has been said, the fact that he is not allowed to offer more than — francs in cash, is a considerable help in settling claims on the spot.

The first thing to do on arriving at a village to investigate claims is to find the Maire or the Garde-Champêtre. One of the things that surprises an Englishman most in French rural life is that every village, however small, has its Maire. Pray divest yourself, gentle reader, of your preconceived ideas suggested by the word Mayor. Do not expect to find an imposing figure in broadcloth, and with a gold chain on his waistcoat. The French village Maire is generally a peasant-proprietor, who works his own little piece of land with his own labour. He is unpaid, and is elected every year. As a rule, most of the clerical work is done by his paid secretary, who is generally, as has been said, the village schoolmaster or schoolmistress. Besides the Maire there is in every village a Garde-Champêtre. His position is somewhat difficult to define. Perhaps he can best be described as the village steward or bailiff. He seems to know every house in the village, and almost every brick in it. He certainly has a most complete knowledge of every parcel of land in the neighbourhood, and can tell you without faltering the exact boundaries of every man's property, though there may be no landmarks visible to the casual ob-

server. He, of course, belongs to the peasant class, and is almost invariably an honest, reliable, and charming type of man. It is the Garde-Champêtre who can give the Claims Officer the most assistance, whether it be as to the character of the inhabitants, the justice of a claim, the condition of a building, or the value of a crop. With him as "guide, philosopher, and friend," a visit to the claims in his domain becomes a pleasant excursion, interspersed with chat about the weather, the crops, and the prospects of victory.

So far we have only spoken of villages which lie some little distance behind the firing line, and are practically out of range of the enemy's guns. There is another class of village, which lies close behind the firing line, and is subject to daily shelling, and sometimes to a heavy bombardment. This class of village has long since been evacuated of its inhabitants, and is a more or less complete ruin.

But there is an intermediate class of village which is subject to occasional shelling, but which—at any rate up to the time when munitions began to pour in for our gunners, and enabled them to worry the Hun and provoke him to retaliation—had not suffered much. Here the inhabitants preferred to take the risk of an occasional shell to evacuating their homes and abandoning the large profits they were able to make out of our occupation. It was not very

difficult up till last summer to differentiate between *faits de guerre*, for which we are not responsible, and damage done by our troops. But after the bombardment which preceded our Somme push last July had begun, matters were different. The Hun began to devote his attention much more freely to the areas where he guessed our troops were massing for the attack, and it was deemed prudent to evacuate these villages of their inhabitants. It became increasingly difficult to assess claims which had been made before this period, but which could not be investigated till after the change in circumstances. In some cases the inhabitants came back after our line had gone forward, and so put a greater distance between the Hun and these villages. But even then little more than a rough guess was possible, though a commiseration for the pitiable losses suffered by the inhabitants moved even the heart of a Claims Officer to err on the side of generosity.

The difficulties encountered in such cases are still more marked in the case of large and once flourishing towns. A certain town has always been the victim of the Hun's attention, at some periods more markedly than others. It has never been entirely cleared of its civilian population, but most of those who left looked up their houses as they were and went elsewhere. Accommodation had to be found for the troops, and not unnaturally they were put into unoccupied

houses. Picture a company of men straight from the trenches put into a furnished house! They are cold, wet, tired, and filthy. Can they be expected to show the same care that you or I would show in paying an afternoon call on a friend? The furniture has never been meant for the use or the strain to which it is now put. First one piece of furniture is broken or disappears, and then another. *Facilis descensus Averni*. It can easily be imagined that in six months' time there will not be much left. The writer was sent to inspect some houses there not long ago. All he knew was from the claim, which was practically an inventory of a decently furnished villa type of house. But he could find nothing when he arrived at the house. One item struck a note of pathos. It was the inventory of a clothes-cupboard—

Vêtements—Homme, frs. 100
Femme, frs. 100
Hélène, frs. 100
Alice, frs. 50

What had happened to poor little Alice's wardrobe, to say nothing of those of her elders? Such cases will be very difficult of adjustment. In the writer's opinion they come almost as much under the heading of *Faits de Guerre* as the damage done by the enemy's shells, for under the circumstances the loss was almost as inevitable.

A word or two must be said about the French interpreters attached to the British Forces.

Doubtless many a young subaltern freshly joined has been struck with surprise at the care apparently displayed for the spiritual welfare of its troops by the French Government, when he has seen a board announcing the presence of the "Mission Militaire Française," till he has realised that it is the headquarters, not of some Franciscan or Benedictine friars, but of the French interpreters attached to the Division. These interpreters are an excellent body of men, and often of great use to the Claims Officer. They carry out their difficult duties of intermediaries between the British troops and the French inhabitants with unflinching tact and great impartiality. An interpreter who does his duty, as most of them do, will go round with an officer of the unit to which he is attached before the unit leaves its billets, and find out and report on the damages complained of, either personally or in writing. Such reports are of the greatest possible use to the Claims Officer. In cases where a unit has been for a long time, as happened in many cases during the winter of 1915-16, he is of still more use, as he has lived in the village and associated with its inhabitants, and is able to diagnose for the Claims Officer the character of the claimants, and to say with comparative certainty whether they are claiming too much, or only a fair compensation.

The writer remembers making an appointment one day with an interpreter to settle some

outstanding claims in a certain village. It was a warm summer afternoon, and there were some six or seven claims in different parts of the village. He was wondering whether there was enough daylight left to do them all. But he was at once taken in hand by the interpreter, and walked at a brisk pace from one house to another. The claims were quickly examined, a price varying between 25 and 50 per cent of that claimed at once offered, and after a few cheery words of persuasion from the interpreter, accepted with a shrug and a smile and the words, "C'est la guerre." In every instance the claimant was induced to accept less than he had claimed, but was left in a state of good-humour by the promise to pay on the following day. This was due to the tact and *bonhomie* of the interpreter, who knew his people and was known by them. The writer was saved a great loss of time, as he was taken straight from one house to another without having to inquire his way, and a considerable saving was effected to the British taxpayer, without any diminution of "l'entente cordiale." That is the secret of settling a claim satisfactorily, to get the claimant to accept a reasonable reduction of his claim, and yet leave him in good-humour.

Mention must be made of one more class of person on whom the Claims Officer relies, and that is the Gendarmes, a certain number of whom are attached for duty to the Assistant-Provost-Marshal (more famil-

ially known as the A.P.M.) of a Division. These men are held in very great respect, almost amounting to fear, by the French civilians. Where a civilian refuses to admit a billeting party, it is generally sufficient to threaten the presence of a Gendarme and the door is opened. His actual presence secures instant compliance. So in the case of claims, it is often very useful to take a Gendarme with one. He examines the claimant or witnesses, and embodies their statements, which they have to sign, in a Procès-Verbal which has practically all the weight of sworn evidence. The respect in which the Gendarme is held is very evident during the course of this examination, and where a claim is supported by a Procès-Verbal considerably more weight is attached to it.

In conclusion, let me quote one or two claims which are a little outside the ordinary run.

A claim was received for the loss of six hens alleged to have been poisoned. On investigation it was found that in the billet, of which the hens were part-occupants, there was a large number of rats. Other expedients to get rid of them having failed, rat-poison was put down. The hens, with perverted curiosity, sampled this, with fatal results, and the claimant thought he was entitled to compensation. His demands were satisfied, though the claim hardly came "within the meaning of the Act."

A claim was received for some straw in a barn which

had been used by horses. On investigation a curious position of affairs was found to exist. The barn belonged to one person, who received the billeting money. This person, whom we will call "A," had lent the barn to "B" to store his straw. "B" had no objection to British horses being billeted among his straw, providing he had the manure which would result, and which would be of considerable value to him. But the yard outside the barn belonged to "C." The gunners of the battery in question, when the straw had become useless for their purposes, naturally threw it into the yard. "B" requested them to remove it to his yard at the other end of the street. The Tommies merely remarked "Non compris," and continued to throw it into the yard. "C" refused to allow "B" to come in and remove the manure, so "B" claimed for the loss of the straw against the British Army. The writer pointed out to "B" that as he had not objected to the straw being used, it was up to him to recover the manure from "C," and that the possession of the manure was not a matter for the Claims Commission to settle. The claimant became much excited, so for the sake of peace and good feeling the writer offered to pay half the sum claimed, and finally a little more; but all compromise was refused with contumely, and nothing remained except to send the claim to the Commission.

The writer was sitting in his office one morning when an officer with whom he had a slight acquaintance came in. "Good-morning. I have come to ask you to help me. I have just come up from the Base, and have lost my luggage." "Very sorry to hear that, but I don't quite see what I can do." "But surely you are the Divisional Claims Officer. I want you to claim it for me from the R.T.O." A short explanation of the real purpose of the Claims Office caused the applicant to depart, a sadder and possibly a little wiser man. When one realises how very limited is the junior regimental officer's knowledge of the duties of a regular Staff Officer, it is

hardly surprising that the humble work of the Claims Office should remain somewhat obscure.

It is hoped that what has been said may throw a sidelight on a not unimportant feature of the war—namely, the relations between the British Army and the French civilian population. It is one of the Claims Officer's duties to supply some of the lubrication to enable the wheels to run smoothly. The work is not full of the joy of battle, nor girt about with the pomp and circumstance of war; but it is necessary work, interesting and full of variety, and brings one into contact with all sorts and conditions of men.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

PREPARING THE WAY FOR A RETURN TO THE OLD METHODS OF DECEPTION—A BILL FOR THE DISFRANCHISEMENT OF THE INTELLIGENT—UNFETTERED DEMOCRACY—HERR BETHMANN-HOLLWEG'S POSITION—THE PENALTY OF FALSEHOOD AND ARROGANCE—THE GERMAN EDUCATION BUBBLE PRICKED.

WE are in the midst of the greatest war known to history. We have been fighting for nearly three years, and the road which we have to traverse before we reach the goal of victory is long and uncertain. The members of our Government are said to be overworked. Whatever energies they have should be devoted simply and entirely to the winning of the war. They possess the trust and confidence of the country as few Governments have ever possessed them. And it is hardly credible that in this hour of crisis they should decide to push a Reform Bill through the House of Commons. When in 1832 our demagogues thought it useful to destroy what Mr Gladstone declared with truth was the best constitution ever devised by the wit of man, many months, a general election, and a threat to make peers preceded the passage of the Bill. With the Germans facing us on the Western front, and the best of our citizens in the trenches, we cannot discuss as we should a measure which will gravely affect the future of the Empire. And so we are asked to take it as it stands, to withhold opposition, since opposition might weaken us in the face of the foe, and tacitly to consent to a revolution, the

end of which no politician can foresee.

Only one excuse would be possible for this irrelevant legislation: a general demand from an undivided country that the Bill should pass. We believe that no demand of the sort has been made. The war still holds our attention and fills our thoughts. For the poor game of politics we have happily lost our taste, and outside the House of Commons, which still thinks in programmes and expresses itself in catch-words, franchises and polling-booths and their hideous accompaniments of falsehood and exaggeration were long ago forgotten. In truth, the war abroad meant peace at home, until without motive or reason this monstrous Bill was sprung upon us.

But we are told—and this is the one little shred of defence which has been suggested for the action of the Government—"the present House of Commons is not sufficiently representative to deal with the task of reconstruction which will immediately follow the war." That is perfectly true. But if it is not sufficiently representative to deal with reconstruction, it is not sufficiently representative to deal with reform. If the new House be elected in accord-

ance with a Bill which, so far from being approved by the country, is wholly unknown to it, what becomes of the representative principle? The Bill, if it be passed, will be passed without the general sanction, and will carry no heavier weight than is imposed by a coalition which has so grossly forgotten its duty as to interrupt the conduct of the war by wantonly meddling with the constituencies. That we must have a new register is clear to all; that the soldiers and sailors who have saved the country should be able to record their votes is an accepted axiom. But these two necessary objects might be easily achieved without throwing the whole constitution of Great Britain into the melting-pot.

We do not pretend to know by what course of argument, if any, our Ministers were persuaded to do this thing at this moment. It is evident only that there is a general competition in renouncement. Politicians on either side are standing in white sheets to confess the hardened errors of their lives. Mr Asquith, on the one hand, smiles unctuously upon women's suffrage. Mr Long, on the other, gives up, at a word, the settled convictions of a long career. And they have done all this, it seems, without any impulsion from without. The Speaker presided over a committee which was said to be unanimous, and was not, and there was an end of it. No opportunity was given to members

of the House to consult their constituents. If democracy has any meaning at all, its sacred privileges have been grossly violated, and the very forms of representative government have been openly defied.

The Bill, introduced into the House by Mr Long, is said to be the result of the deliberations presided over by the Speaker. Yet it is like nothing so much as a reach-me-down from a Radical pigeon-hole. It might have been reposing the last twenty years in the dust of the Home Office. It is a measure ingeniously designed for keeping the Radicals in office as tenants for life. Though it may be foiled by accident of its purpose, that purpose is none the less plain for all to see. It is intended to ensure the permanent supremacy of the Radicals, to hand over the governance of the country to one section, and one section only, of the community. Now to this plan there are certain objections, which have nothing to do with the prejudices of class or party. Wealth and thrift may be crimes: to pretend they are not is to court unpopularity. He who works with his cunning head may be a far worse man and citizen than he who works with his honest hands. So often have we been told this that it seems idle to contradict it. But even the criminally wealthy and the monster degraded by intelligence still deserve some small measure of justice at the hands of the State. To be tried by one's peers is (or was) the

birthright of Englishmen. If Mr Long's Bill is passed, the complete control of all classes will pass into the hands of one class—a class which has no political experience, and which will, if it can, bend the law to its own exclusive purpose. The Trade Disputes Act was not passed for nothing.

In other words, the Reform Bill, which is to be smuggled through with as little discussion as possible, will disfranchise utterly the intelligent and thrifty minority. It may be, as that brilliant political philosopher and inactive saviour of Ireland, Mr Birrell, once proclaimed, that minorities must suffer. It is an amiable doctrine, which throws a flood of light upon the inherent justice of counting heads, but it is a doctrine which is not without its dangers. Mr Birrell thought that, if only nothing was done in Ireland at all, the reign of peace might ensue, and he was rewarded inevitably with bloodshed and murder. And minorities may appear to his sanguine eye very ridiculous things. Obviously, as they are less in number than majorities, and since numbers alone are honourable, they deserve not the respect of such distinguished statesmen as Mr Birrell, the elect of Bristol. But minorities, if they are too harshly entreated, are still capable of rising against oppression, and when the democracy of Great Britain has converted itself, with Mr Long's help, into a tyrant, according to the formula of Aristotle, then revolution may well be

the one resource left to a persecuted minority.

Let us consider the situation of the country, which once might boast itself the best governed in the world. After a campaign of unexampled falsehood and chicanery, Mr Asquith abolished, by methods upon which not even he, in his perpetual retirement, can reflect with pride, the veto of the House of Lords. The way in which the deed was done, no less than the doing of it, will remain for ever a dark blot upon the gang of politicians who found profit in destroying the British Constitution. And when the crime had been committed, Mr Asquith announced to an incredulous country that he regarded the reform of the House of Lords as a debt of honour. That debt he did not pay; none who knew him expected him to pay it; and now, fortunately for England, he has been deprived, permanently, of the opportunity of paying that or any other debt of honour. So we are confronted with the possibility of a single chamber, elected by manhood and womanhood suffrage,—no one can be so simple as to believe that the age of female voters will not be instantly reduced to 21, and that of women and men the same qualification will be demanded,—without safeguards or compensations, without the power of second thoughts, without any sense of tradition or respect for the past. And what was once known as the best constitution in the world will degenerate into an omnipotent board of guardians,

larger in size than its unhappy model, and equal to it in incompetence and corruption. Is it not plain for all to see, that no Government has the right to pass a Reform Bill through the House of Commons until the House of Lords is given renewed strength and power?

The strength of the British Constitution lay in its exquisite balance. The King, the proper symbol of all power, the Lords and the Commons, exercised a wise restraint, each upon the others. But now that the Lords are deprived of all power, and that the Commons are to be elected by one class only, which will easily dominate all constituencies, we can boast no longer of the steady growth of our institutions. We shall be forced to admit, if the Government has its way, that in the midst of a great war a revolution has taken place, without reason or excuse—a revolution which will transform completely our social and political life. We are asked to pass from a limited monarchy to such an unfettered democracy as exists nowhere else in the world. France has her Senate. The United States of America are protected by the double restraint of Senate and Supreme Court. England alone will be the victim of a single chamber, elected by the suffrages of all men and all women—elected, that is to say, wholly and solely by the working classes,—and England, by her position as the head of a vast empire, is the country least fitted to make the hazardous experi-

ment. What encroachments will be made upon the freedom and property of the unrepresented minority we can dimly surmise. Confiscation and public theft will doubtless be the declared policy of our new rulers. The minority will be invited to pay all the taxes, and the majority will take great pleasure in spending the money thus gathered, with all the gaiety of wastefulness. Above all, one thing is obvious: the King will be asked to resign his throne, since no King can survive in a State which has but a single chamber and universal suffrage. And with the King will vanish the British Empire, for the King is the one gracious and visible link which binds the dominions oversea to Great Britain. Without his sovereignty and all that it means to us, we shall fall apart, like the wreckage of a ship that has foundered on the rocks.

The sole excuse alleged for this unasked-for revolution is that it is inevitable. Ruin is never inevitable except for the fool. And how shall we confess it inevitable when we have done nothing to oppose it or to set forth its manifold dangers? Does anybody believe that the soldiers fighting in the trenches are determined that the officers, whom they gladly obey, shall never again have a hand in choosing the representatives of the people? And what sort of a "reconstruction" will the new House of Commons achieve, whose members will be chosen by the proletariat, after an election in

which a single conscientious objector from Portland will have greater influence than the man who owns a dock or a factory?

As we have said, we do not pretend to understand the motive which underlies the introduction of the Bill. The spirit of gambling, which dominates the Radical party, accounts, of course, for its adherence to any scheme which might help in the disintegration of the State. But we should have thought that Mr Long and Sir George Cave preserved some sense of tradition and its value. They have been trained in the old school of Toryism, which does not (or did not) worship numbers like a god, and we had some sort of faith that they would defend what hitherto they have held to be the welfare of the country. For the rest, the common politician argues thus: Democracy is a good thing—a vast assumption, to be sure—and therefore we cannot have too much of it. We do not ask of a voter whether he be fit to think or vote; we applaud him only because he marks another paper at the poll.

Aristotle was the first of political philosophers, and he was not opposed to the form of government known as democracy. But he knew well that a democracy without safeguards was the greatest danger which a State could incur—that it could end only in revolution and extinction. And being a philosopher, he was a prophet also, who fore-

saw clearly the fallacies which beset our politicians to-day. "In order to constitute a democracy and strengthen the people," he wrote, "the leaders have been in the habit of including as many as they can; . . . for nothing comes amiss to such a democracy. This is the way in which demagogues proceed; whereas the right thing would be to make no more additions when the number of the commonalty exceeds that of the notables, or of the middle-class,—beyond this not to go." We are proposing to go far beyond this, even far beyond the fifth form of democracy, "in which not the law but the multitude has the supreme power, and supersedes the law by its decrees." And yet there was a time when we, too, understood the value of safeguarding our democracy—when we, too, thought it wise, in the interests of all, to balance the notables and the middle-class against the commonalty. This we achieved by many methods—by limiting the franchise, by the reasonable creation of pocket-boroughs, by the plural vote, and by other artifices which seem absurd to those who know no other sanctity than numbers, and who believe that the odd man is inspired to speak with the voice of God, but which nevertheless had their origin in political wisdom. But the traditional moderation of our countrymen is now discarded wantonly and without persuasion, and Tory Ministers are content to face the future

and to reconstruct Great Britain after the stress of war with a single chamber, whose members are elected by universal suffrage.

Such are some of the general considerations which we believe may be opposed to the proposals of Sir George Cave and Mr Long. These gentlemen are convinced that, in order to make a new register and to enable our sailors and soldiers to vote, we must pass a measure of manhood and womanhood suffrage. They resemble the Chinamen who burnt down their houses to enjoy the flavour of roast pig. And if we examine the Bill in detail, we shall soon see that it is the result of no compromise, but a Radical relief bill, naked and unashamed. It might have been contrived simply to counteract the vote of the soldiers and sailors by adding to the register a sufficient counterpoise of obedient voters. We are told that it is a compromise. A compromise between whom and what? The fact that women's suffrage and proportional representation are to be decided by a free and unfettered House means no more than that the Government has been unable to make up its mind upon these two thorny questions. For the rest, every provision is in favour of an unfettered, unguarded democracy. In the first place, the ownership vote is abolished altogether, and the ownership vote, which is cast on the side of solidity and strength, cannot be foregone without danger to the State.

In the second place, the votes which have been suppressed at the top have been atoned for a hundredfold at the bottom. In other words, we are to be blessed with universal suffrage. The plan has the merit of perfect simplicity. "We sweep away all the existing complicated and mysterious qualifications," says Mr Long, "and put in their place two simple qualifications—a period of six months for residence, and occupation of business premises of the annual value of £10." We are to have manhood suffrage, and womanhood suffrage too, and it matters not a jot whether the soldiers come home or not. We have plenty of voters left, and the conscientious objector is a far better man at the polling-booth than a soldier, for he will vote as he is expected to vote, and will ask no questions. Briefly, the new Bill is a triumph. It wholly repeals 30 existing statutes and repeals partially 32 more. And if incidentally it brings the country to ruin, what does that matter? It will in the meantime have saved a world of trouble, and will have conciliated some millions of the ignorant and unfit.

Then, of course, there is to be a redistribution of seats, and a boundary commission is already sitting. And redistribution means another assault upon the honoured traditions of our English life. Many of our great historical cities will cease to be represented by members of their own. The wholesome sentiment, which once attached itself to names and places, will be

utterly abolished, and the inhumanity of politics will be reinforced in accord with the will of the Radicals. Worse than this, if equal treatment be meted out to urban and agricultural constituencies, a fresh injustice will be done to the countryside. How shall you hope to win for agriculture a fair representation, when you give to West Ham and Walthamstow, for instance, as many members as will be returned by the whole county of Somerset? The voters in West Ham and Walthamstow are so many repetitions of the same man. It matters not a jot to them how many members they elect. One member can efficiently discharge the light duty of representing them all. But the interests of a county, like Somerset, are many and various, and we shall do a very poor service to agriculture, which in this hour of need we pretend to encourage, if, paying no attention to their special needs, we break up the rural counties by the cheap and easy method of counting heads.

The proposal to hold all elections upon one day is another sop to the Radicals, and a resolute attempt to make the plural vote of no effect. If a voter carries on his business in London and has a residence in Scotland, for instance, it will be almost impossible that he should exercise the sole privilege granted him by this so-called compromise. Similarly the attempt to save the candidate's expense is a mere trick to win the approval of the Labour

Party. If we are electing members to the unpaid service of their country we should not have a word to say against it. But as we provide the successful candidates with sinecure appointments of £400 a year, we think that they should risk their own money in competing for the prize. We might as well undertake to pay the coaching fees for the young men and women who strive in their thousands to be admitted into the offices of the Government, and of whom many are about as useful as the common member of Parliament. But bad as the Bill is in detail, it is far more dangerous in its general purpose. To broaden the franchise in this hour of crisis, to make no attempt to penalise the conscientious objectors, to create a new electorate which shall counterbalance the vote of the soldiers who have fought and bled for their country—all these projects might well have seemed good to the Radicals, who most fervently hope that they will not be called to account for treacherously allowing the country to slip into a great war unprepared. We should not have believed it possible that politicians, who still call themselves Tories, should have been thus easily misled by the supposed "unanimity" of the Speaker's conference. Mr Long is of opinion that it is a useful thing to get reform out of the way before the time comes for reconstruction. How does he think we shall face a shattered world with a single chamber elected by universal

suffrage? Not by this method shall we choose representatives strong enough to save the country or to silence the parrot-cries, which will doubtless once more be popular, of "big loaves" and "drunken peers."

Had things been left to take their course, we might have seen after the war a change of heart in the people. We might have welcomed a return of the statesmanship which once was the stay and comfort of Great Britain. But the new Reform Bill, if it be passed, will ensure a pitiful return to the old methods of deception. Few candidates have the courage to tell the voters that they mean to do their duty, if they be elected, without considering the greed and ambition of their constituents. After all, our members of Parliament are, for the most part, obedient to their masters, and the more widely you extend the franchise the lower you will find the elect of the people in honour and intelligence. The worst is, that beneath all the false rhetoric employed by those who wish to extend the franchise there lurks the foolish doctrine of equality. One man one vote is a bedlam cry, and when it is heard in patience it means that all the thriftiest and best educated of our citizens are excluded for ever from sharing the responsibilities of Government. Men are not born equal, and will never grow to equality until brains be penalised and energy be regarded as a deadly sin. And now in the face of

the ballot-box we are all to be equal, and a pretty mess we shall make of it. Shakespeare, of course, is out of date. He was not a member of Parliament; he was not even a vestryman. But he knew his fellow-men and their vanities, and this is the light in which he envisaged equality—

"O, when degree is shaken,
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
Then enterprise is sick! How could
communities,
Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in
cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable
shores,
The primogenitive and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres,
laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic
place?
Take but degree away, untune that
string,
And, hark, what discord follows! Each
thing meets
In mere oppugnancy."

We have made up our minds to untune the string. The discord will surely follow, and in mere oppugnancy class meet class.

While our politicians are wantonly stirring up strife at home, the war approaches somewhat nearer its appointed end. Not that peace is in sight, nor that the hour has come to ring the bells of victory. But the task which lies ahead of us is clearly discerned, and the methodical energy of Marshal Haig is meeting with its sure, if slow, reward. Moreover, the fact that America does not call up her first army of 500,000 until September proves that our latest Allies, at any

rate, are looking forward to a long struggle. And the few peacemongers that are left in the House of Commons are the mere victims of confused thought. The reception of Mr Snowden's amendment demonstrated the complete fatuity of him and his party. He himself renounced the possibility of peace. For, having begun by asking the Government to repudiate any thought of conquest, he presently accepted the necessity of the reparation and the indemnity which shall be made by Germany to Belgium and France. Now, since we know that the declared demand of the Pan-German party is that the whole of Belgium and France as far as the Somme should be annexed to the Fatherland, it is idle for Mr Snowden, after his admission, to speak another word in favour of peace. Of course Mr Snowden is not a serious person. He is but one of the few remaining demagogues who love all other countries better than their own, and who, after the war, will disappear for ever from our public life. But the fact that he and his few supporters confess that reparation and indemnity must be exacted from Germany, proves that there does not exist in England even a small party which is sincerely favourable to a patched-up peace.

And while England is determined never to sheathe her sword until she has executed due justice upon the Boche, the Boche dares not call for peace, even if he would. The

mere suggestion would involve Germany in an instant revolution. She has scaled so high a pinnacle of falsehood and arrogance, that she cannot descend once more to the plain of truth without an accident fatal to limb and life. A nation which has been fed for three years upon a diet of imagined victories—victories by land, victories by Zeppelin, victories by sea—must be wheedled by slow degrees into accepting the dry bread of defeat. When Herr Bethmann-Hollweg last addressed his countrymen, it was evident that he felt the delicacy of his position. There was no more talk of a victor's peace, no more boasts of Germany's invincibility. He seemed to think it sufficient for his own and his countrymen's pride that the Allies on the West had not "broken through." Between this modest claim and the dominion of the world there is a wide ocean of shattered hopes and black disappointments. Indeed, the German Chancellor saw no other course than to temporise. He wished, if he could, to reconcile the irreconcilables—the Socialists and the Junkers. On the one hand is a party which, like Mr Snowden's, pretends to think that the time has come for an amicable discussion, as though we and our Allies would ever discuss anything amicably with the shameless barbarians. On the other hand stand such proud and greedy men as have not yet given up their insensate pretence to the dominion of the earth. These men have learned

nothing during the progress of the war. To them the battle of the Marne was an unfortunate incident, and no more. In their wild dreams they still imagine that Paris and Calais are theirs, and that London is a mere heap of ruins. None can envy Herr Bethmann-Hollweg his job of keeping all his pack at his heels. And he preserved a semblance of union by saying nothing at all. He refused obstinately to name the terms which would satisfy the Boches, because he knew full well that, whatever they were, they would not satisfy both parties. It is our own fault if we do not understand precisely where and how we stand. All the advantages of time and strength are on our side. The ultimate issue is not and cannot be doubtful. But victory is not yet, and we shall do ourselves and our cause nothing but harm if we interrupt the vigorous conduct of the war by chattering idly about a peace, which will not come until Germany asks for it in humility and distress.

The war has shattered other dreams than the Kaiser's dream of universal sovereignty. It has shattered also our foolish dream that all would be well if only we followed, in education, the lead of the Germans. It is a very poor tribute to the intelligence of those politicians who presumed to govern the country before the war, that they insisted with a tiresome iteration that our salvation lay only in a sedulous imitation of the Boches. Our one hope of suc-

cess, we were told, was to shape our schools and colleges upon the German model. We were asked to commit an outrage upon the principle of gradual growth, which is the only sound principle in life or letters. Before the war we were in danger of following false guides to false ends, but now we know the Germans for what they are. Such learning as they have acquired has taught them nothing else than a contempt for law, human and divine, and their boasted efficiency, tenderly nursed for half a century, is proved to be second-rate after all.

But though we have discovered these things, it is well to have our knowledge reinforced. And therefore we welcome Professor Burnet's 'Higher Education and the War' (London: Macmillan & Co.), which puts in a small compass the truth about the schools and universities of Germany. We do not think that anybody will read this treatise without coming to the conclusion that our own system is better both for peace and war, and that we should do ourselves an irreparable injury if we forced our English boys through the German mill. Indeed, if *Kultur* be one of the underlying causes of the war, then it is true that we Allies are fighting for the ancient civilisation of Greece and Rome. Professor Burnet points out that such great Frenchmen as Mm. Bontroux, Lavoise, and Bergson have thus defined the cause for which their countrymen have

drawn the sword. "They know," says Professor Burnet, "that, while the restoration of economic prosperity after the war is a matter of great importance, the restoration of *humanitas* to Europe is of still more vital moment, and they have come to the conclusion that one of the chief lessons taught by the war is the necessity of strengthening *l'éducation classique*." And one of Professor Burnet's own pupils, who has since been killed in action, said before he went to the front "that the war clearly meant the breakdown of German education." The truth is that education in Germany aims not at humanism but at nationalism. It does not want to make men, but Germans. The champions of Pan-Germanism, for instance, are the enemies of the classics, which they say have for their object the Græco-Latin *Kultur*, which is a common possession of Western Europe. In the same spirit they condemn the study of Goethe and Schiller, whom they discuss as cosmopolitans, unworthy the attention of good Germans. But Pan-Germanism is not yet the creed of the German Empire, and the curriculum of Gothic, Old High German, and Middle High German, which no doubt would have been enforced after a German victory, are likely now to pass into oblivion with *Kultur* itself. What *Kultur* means we know well enough, but Professor Burnet gives two examples of its influence, which are worth remembering. He quotes what Professor Ostwald,

a fine flower of *Kultur*, wrote in a letter to an American friend: "We pacifists"—he has the effrontery to call himself and his compatriots "pacifists"—"must understand only that unhappily the time is not yet sufficiently developed to establish peace in the peaceful way. The English policy of World Dominion contracts the eminently peaceful sentiment of the greatest part of the people, and especially of the German Emperor." That is what it is to be a great German chemist, and wholly destitute of humour! And Professor von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, who is familiar to all English scholars, is not more wisely inspired than Herr Ostwald himself. Deploping the absence of any effective sanction for international law, this eminent gentleman solemnly declares that "the only hope is for Germany to dictate peace to the rest of Europe." When we remember the unprovoked assault which Germany made upon the security of the world, when we remember the torn-up scraps of paper, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the deportation of men and women from the occupied territories, we shall certainly approve Professor Burnet's comment. "I for one," says he, "would not choose to know as much Greek as Wilamowitz or as much chemistry as Ostwald at the price of having my mind work like that."

Pan-Germanism has not yet come into its own, and Germany, in spite of the Kaiser and Professor Ostwald, still

does its best to profit by the *Kultur* of Western Europe. Her curriculum differs not essentially from our own, and it is well to remind the scientific enthusiasts, who are always holding her up to us as a model upon which we should frame ourselves, that no specialisation is allowed in any German school, and that in very few classes are more than two hours a week devoted to science. But what it is important for us to remember as a solemn warning is, that the schools in Germany are institutions of the State, that a boy's whole career is governed by what he does at school, that in the general crushing of individualism the clever ones are neglected for the laggards, and that the dominant aim is the pushing on of hopeless mediocrity. Worse than this, it may be said that for the German the main object is not to learn, but to escape military service "with the peasants." Those who complete certain courses may claim the privilege of one year's service as volunteers. From this privilege proceeds a social distinction which parents desire intensely to obtain for their sons. The volunteer (or *Freiwilliger*) is a soldier for a single year, and does not live in barracks, and when his year's service is accomplished he becomes an officer in the Reserve, which assures his position in German society unto the end of his life. The original purpose of the Prussian Higher Schools was, as

Professor Burnet tells us, "to train an *élite* for the service of the State," and they have been turned "into a machine for the gratification of the most paltry ambitions of a *parvenu* middle-class." To this distortion are due many of the evils of German education. "It is the duty of the school," says Professor Caener, "so far as in it lies, to take measures to prevent the ungifted sons of well-to-do families getting to the Universities, and so on the way towards leading positions." But the school does not do its duty, and a constant pressure is put upon the masters to let the "ungifted" ones easily through the sieve. And since the purpose of the education is merely to prepare the boy for "his future career," to use a phrase dear to our own reformers, it follows that parents and boys are equally interested in good reports and the passage of examinations. Indeed, so poignant are the emotions aroused by success or failure at school, that "the Government of Württemberg, for instance, has prohibited the sending of school reports at the end of the Michaelmas term, and the reason assigned is that the Christmas rejoicings of the family might be disturbed by the receipt of possibly unfavourable judgments on the sons!"

From this same cause—the dependence of the boy's future upon the work he does at school—spring many other evils. The number of suicides between the ages of ten and twenty is always increasing

in Prussia. The common explanation is that the boys are world-weary from over-work. Professor Burnet dismisses this explanation, and he is in the right of it. The young Prussians do not work as hard as young Englishmen. But they are anxious always about the result of their work. They fear the constant pressure of their parents; they dread the scrutiny which their reports and examinations receive at home; and, missing the joyousness of youth, they put an end to the tiresome strife. And thus it is on the double ground of morals and learning we are free to condemn the system of Prussian education. As it has nothing sound to teach us, so we trust that no fanatics will ever again attempt to persuade us to an insincere imitation. Though we are wont to disparage our own achievements, it is certain that we have arrived, by the slow processes of experience, at the best method yet known

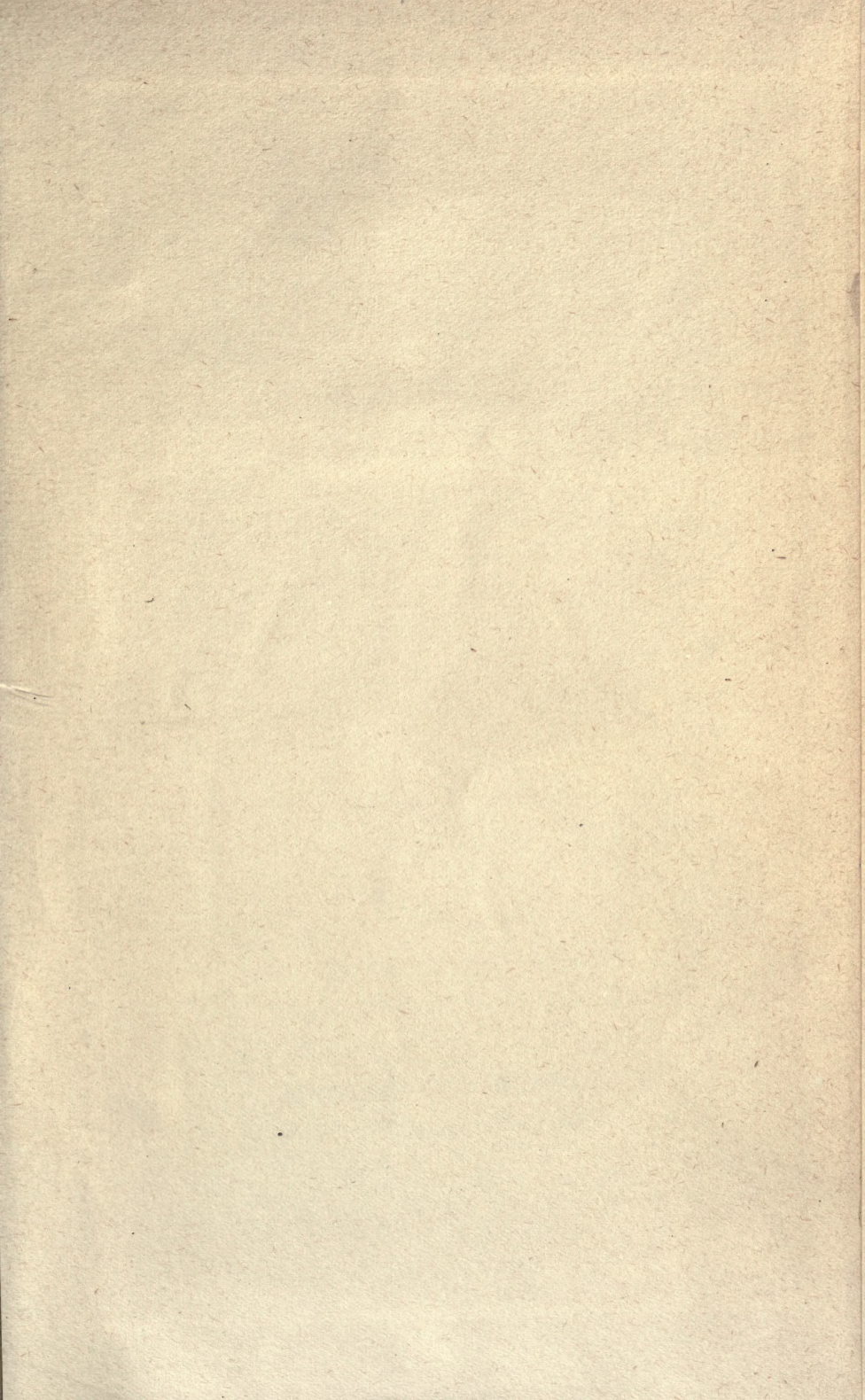
to the world. Humanism has much to commend it. It is unspoiled by the sordid hope of future advancement. It allows the boy to grow into a man without the petty restraints of a greedy ambition. It permits him for once in his life to desert the path of practical utility and to devote himself to a study, which, useless from the point of view of money-getting, will yet make him a full and balanced man. Above all, humanism teaches those who practice it how to take the initiative when the need comes, and to speak to their fellows with the voice of command. So that even if the war had done nothing else, it would have helped to dissipate the foolish old legend of German education, and would have proved to us that our own system, so heartily abused by the half-baked, has not elsewhere its match in the making of men and soldiers.

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